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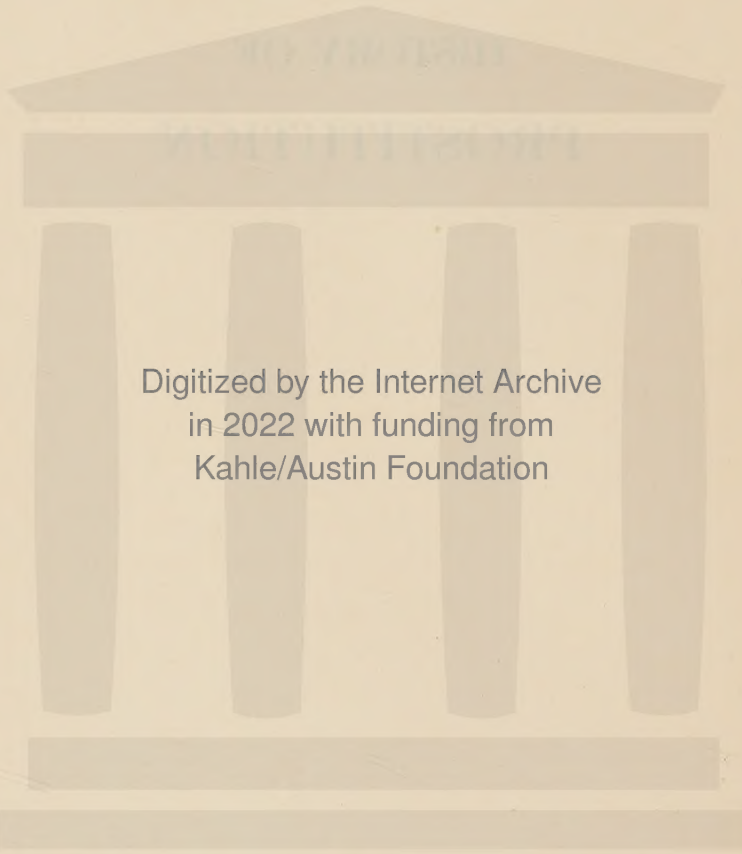








HISTORY OF  
PROSTITUTION



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# HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION

AMONG ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, FROM  
THE MOST REMOTE ANTIQUITY TO  
THE PRESENT DAY

*by*

PAUL LACROIX  
(PIERRE DUFOUR)

*Member of Many Academies and Learned Societies  
French and Foreign*

*Translated from the French, with an Introduction by*

SAMUEL PUTNAM

VOLUME ONE

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## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

### *To the Revised Edition*

IT is a remarkable fact that, while prostitution is one of the oldest scourges of the human race, the literature on the subject, down to the present year, 1931, remains prevailingly fragmentary and, aside from incidental sources, amazingly sparse. Anyone who doubts this has but to go through the catalogues of the great libraries of the world. He may find a number of special tracts on one phase or another of the subject, medical, social, etc., but he will discover no one work giving a scientific view of the entire subject from the earliest times to the present. In other words, he will encounter no satisfactory, scientific History of Prostitution.

This, it would seem, has been in large part due to intellectual prudery. It is not, indeed, until along about the middle of the nineteenth century that the section of society which arrogates to itself such adjectives as "good" and "respectable", began to feel that this was a matter which concerned its own welfare, along with that of the commonwealth as a whole, and to take an interest in ameliorative measures. It is a significant fact that when the learned Paul Lacroix, in 1851-52, published the work which is here translated, he deemed it best to do so under a pseudonym, that of "Pierre Dufour"; and it is likewise to be noted that the work was promptly suppressed, even in a country which enjoys a (frequently exaggerated) reputation for freedom in sexual matters.

Lacroix, whose authorship of the present HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION is now established, was, it is not to be forgotten, one of the leading scholars or at least bibliophiles of his day, although his erudition was often of an unsystematic sort and tempered by a certain fantasticality. The following brief account of his life and works will be found in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

*LACROIX, PAUL (1806-1884), French author and journalist, was born in Paris on the 27th of April, 1806, the son of a novelist. He is best known under his pseudonym of "P. L. Jacob, bibliophile," or*

## HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION

"*Bibliophile Jacob*," suggested by the constant interest he took in public libraries and books generally. Lacroix was an extremely prolific and varied writer. Over twenty historical romances alone came from his pen, and he also wrote a variety of serious historical works, including a history of Napoleon III, and the life and times of the Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. He was the joint author with Ferdinand Séré of a five-volume work, *LE MOYEN ÂGE ET LA RENAISSANCE* (1847), a standard work on matters, customs and dress of those times, the chief merit of which lies in the great number of illustrations it contains. He also wrote many monographs on phases of the history of culture. Over the signature of Pierre Dufour was published an exhaustive *HISTOIRE DE LA PROSTITUTION* (1851-1852), which has always been attributed to Lacroix. His works on bibliography were also extremely numerous. In 1883, he was appointed librarian of the Arsenal Library in Paris. He died in Paris on the 16th of October, 1884.

Such the reward of a lifetime of patient digging in historic and literary cemeteries! The Britannica account hardly does our author full justice. True, the latter's prolific and varied industry was of the sort that breeds an inevitable suspicion—versatility, for one thing, is almost never forgiven, especially in scholarship; but his *Le Moyen Âge et la Renaissance* scarcely deserves the slight which the Encyclopædia gives it, while there are all those other works, the *Livre d'or des métiers*, the *Curiosités des sciences occultes*, etc., not to mention all the authors whom Lacroix, under his own name or one of his numerous pen-names, at one time or another edited—Rabelais, the *Moyen de parvenir*, such out-of-the-way items as the *La Cazzaria* of *Arsiccio Intronato*—has anyone ever counted them all? One thing is certain, no one can work, say, in the sixteenth century without becoming indebted to him. The truth is, probably, that he was not the orthodox scholar—that is to say, not all-scholar; he was, rather, half scholar, half bibliophile, more or less of an amateur if you like; but the fact remains, his erudition, whatever the lack of order to be discovered in it, and in spite of an occasional unscholarly slipshodness, is little less than overwhelming in its range and, every now and again, in its unexpected minuteness. Bibliophile Jacob, the short of it is, was something more than a scholar; he was quite human, and those who have come to know him find him to be an altogether endearing character.



## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

This, then, was the man who sat down to write the HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION. He was not precisely the first to treat of the subject. He had been preceded by Parent-Duchatelet; but Lacroix himself, in his own Introduction to the present work, gives us a sufficient criticism of his predecessor in the field. Parent-Duchatelet, he remarks, was "an observer and not an historian and archæologist" and had limited himself to dealing with prostitution "from the point of view of public administration, hygiene and statistics." Lacroix was the first to attempt anything like a broad-scale history, and to this day, there is no other work that covers the same ground.\* This does not mean that we need be under any illusions concerning his book. In the light of modern sociology and psycho-pathology, it is thoroughly unscientific; it would be absurd to make any false claims for it upon this score. Its character on the whole is anecdotal; but in this respect, it is a veritable mine and an unrivaled source-book. It is as a source-book that it has been made use of in recent years by certain serious writers on sex, and from this point of view, it would be practically impossible to replace it.

The book has practically no style; and yet, it will be found, I think, to make fascinating reading, even for one who is not primarily interested in the subject; the amount of incidental and abstruse lore to be met with in these pages is astonishing. The author's vocabulary is a trifle limited, while the constant fall of such adjectives as "shameful," "shameless," "infamous" and the like becomes not only wearisome but faintly nauseating. The same is true of the Introduction, where Lacroix, in addition to making a number of false assumptions, leads one to regard him (in view of the evident delight he takes, later on in the book, in highly flavored passages) as something of a jolly old hypocrite. The work must be taken for what it is, neither more nor less than it is; and this translator has not felt called upon either to touch up or tone down the original.

SAMUEL PUTNAM

Paris, February 17, 1931.

\*Lacroix more than once has been plagiarized. One may mention, in Spanish, *La Prostitución desde los primitivos tiempos*, por E. Garte, Barcelona (no date), which is practically a translation, although it does not purport to be, and in French, *La Prostitution à travers les ages*, par le Docteur Caufeynon, Paris, 1902, which is largely an un-accredited condensation.



### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*My thanks are due to Mr. J. U. Nicolson of Chicago, the poet and translator of Villon, who very kindly read proof on the original edition of this work, and who supplied certain notes and verse translations which have been retained in the present edition.*

S. P.





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## INTRODUCTION

IF IT is difficult to define the word *prostitution*, how much more difficult is it to describe the history of prostitution in ancient and modern times! This word, *prostitution*, which brands as with a red iron one of the saddest afflictions of humanity, is employed rather in a figurative than in a literal sense, and it reappears often in spoken or written language without account being taken of its true signification. The grave authors of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (latest edition, 1835) have been able to find for this word no better definition than "abandonment to impudicity." Before them, Richelet was content with a definition still more vague: "Disordered life"; but little satisfied, himself, with this wording, the insufficiency of which is a reflection on good manners, he had attempted to round out his meaning with a less ambiguous phrase: "It is that illegitimate abandonment which a girl or a woman makes of her body to an individual, to the end that the individual in question may take, with her, forbidden pleasures". That phrase in which the authors of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* had exhausted their powers of definition does not even tell us all that the word *prostitution* implies inasmuch as the abandonment with which we are concerned here is practiced, under certain circumstances, by persons of either sex, while the pleasures forbidden by religion or morality are often authorized or tolerated by the law. And so, it is our opinion that this word, *prostitution*, ought to be traced back to its etymologic source in *prostitutum* and be made to include all species of obscene traffic in the human body.

This sensual traffic, which morality reproves, has existed in all centuries and among all peoples; but it has assumed the most varied and the strangest forms; it has been modified in accordance with manners and ideas; it has obtained, ordinarily, the protection of legislators; it has entered into political codes and sometimes even into religious ceremonies; it has, almost always and everywhere, won the rights of the city, so to speak, and it is still, in our day, regulated by the philosophic doctrine of the amelioration of social groups; it is the obligatory auxiliary to the policing of cities; it is the immoral guardian of public morality; it is the sad and indispensable tributary of the brutal passions of mankind.



This, it must be confessed, is one of the most shameful of humanity's sores; but this sore, as old as the world, is to be found lurking sometimes in the shade of the hospitable fireside, sometimes in the mysteries of pagan temples, sometimes under the respectable veils of legal tolerance; this infamous sore, which is always gnawing away, more or less actively, at the social body, has encountered in ancient philosophy and the Christian religion a powerful palliative, if not an absolute remedy; and in the degree to which the people become better and more enlightened, the inevitable evil of prostitution diminishes in intensity and its ravages are to some degree circumscribed. One may not hope that it will disappear entirely, since the vicious instincts to which it corresponds are, unfortunately, inborn in the human species; but one may predict, with certitude, that it will one day hide itself at the bottom of public cesspools, and that it will no longer afflict the gaze of decent folk.

Already, on all sides, in France as well as in all countries subject to a regular government, Prostitution sees the number of her agents diminishing, progressively with the number of her victims; she recoils, as in an access of modesty, before the development of moral reason; she does not abdicate, but she knows that she is dethroned; and so, she wraps herself in her courtesan's robes, dreaming no more of reconquering her shameless kingdom. The moment is not far distant when she will blush for herself, when she will go forth forever from the sanctuary of good manners, and when she will fall by degrees into obscurity and forgetfulness. There are certain maladies of the human heart which, like certain physical diseases, end by exhausting themselves and by losing their epidemic or contagious character, under the influence of a proper mode of life. The leper is no longer known to us except by name, and if one meets, here and there, with certain rare traces of this terrible plague of the Middle Ages, one realizes, happily, that it no longer possesses the power to spread and propagate itself; and so it is, we have today no more than certain alarming symptoms of the influenza, which once devastated whole populations and which, today, only rarely attacks certain isolated individuals.

The hour has, therefore, come to write the history of prostitution, at a time when it is tending more and more to efface itself from the memory of man as from the customs of nations. The historian deals with times which are no more; he resuscitates dead things; he reanimates the past and causes it to live again, for the instruction of the

present and the future; he gives a body and a voice to tradition. The vast and curious subject which we are going to treat, with the aid of erudition and under the censorship of the severest prudence, this subject—at once delicate and suspect—has an intimate connection on all sides in the history of religions, of laws, and of manners; though it has been constantly placed in the discard and, as it were, on the index by those historians occupied with ancient and modern manners, laws, and religions. The archæologists alone, such as Meursius, Laurentius, Musonius, etc., have dared to attack the subject, writing on it Latin dissertations, in which the language of Juvenal and Petronius might at its ease *braver l'honnêteté*, both in words and in fact.

As for us, wholly concerned with archæology as we are, we shall not forget that we are writing in French, and that we are addressing a French public, which wants to be instructed but which wants, at the same time, to be respected. We shall never lose sight of the fact that this book, prepared leisurely for the advancement of science, must also serve as a guide to morality, and that its principal object is to make vice detestable by unveiling its turpitudes. The Lacedæmonians showed their youth the hideous spectacle of drunken slaves in order to teach them to flee drunkenness. God keep us from any desire to render vice amiable, even when we show it crowned with flowers among the peoples of antiquity! It is here, above all, that we are to be distinguished from archæologists and savants, properly so-called, who do not concern themselves with the morality of facts, and who are not concerned with drawing from those facts philosophic consequences. They dissertate at length, for example, on the scandalous cults of Isis, Astarte, Venus, and Priapus; they unveil monstrosities; they describe infamies; but they forget, in the end, to purify our thoughts and tranquilize our minds by setting over against these impure and degrading images the chaste lessons of philosophy and the beneficent effects of Christianity.

Prostitution, in ancient and modern history, exhibits three distinct forms, or degrees, which belong to three different epochs of the life of peoples: 1. Guest Prostitution; 2. Sacred or Religious Prostitution; 3. Legal or Political Prostitution. These three terms sum up well enough the three sorts of prostitution; M. Rabutaux employs these terms in a learned work on the subject, and we are disposed to follow him, in an effort to attain a more general point of view: "Everywhere, as far back as history permits us to go, among all peoples and in all

times, we see, as a more or less general fact, woman accepting the most odious slavery, abandoning herself, without choice and without any feeling of attraction, to the brutal ardors of those who covet her. Sometimes, when all moral light has come to be extinguished, the noble and gentle companion of man loses, in this funereal night, the last trace of her dignity and becoming, through a supreme abasement, indifferent even to the one who possesses her, takes her place as a vile thing among the gifts of hospitality; those sacred relations out of which spring the joys of the fireside and family affection no longer possess, among these degraded peoples, any importance, any value. At other times, in the ancient Orient, for example, and to a greater or less degree among nearly all the peoples of ancient and legendary times, by an alliance still more hideous, the sacrifice of modesty in the woman has been coupled with the dogmas of a monstrous naturalism, which exalts all the passions by making them divine; such a sacrifice becomes the sacred rite of a strange and degenerated cult, and the salary paid to the immodest priestesses is as an offering made to the gods. Among other peoples, finally, among those who hold the most elevated rung on the moral ladder, misery or vice gives over an entire class to the gross impulsions of the senses and the satisfaction of cynic desires, a class relegated to the lowest regions, tolerated, but branded with infamy, a class of unfortunate women for whom debauchery and shame have become a trade."

Thus, it may be seen, M. Rabutaux regards as an odious slavery what we consider an odious traffic. In short, under its three principal forms, prostitution appears to us more venal than servile, for it is always voluntary and free.\*As a rite of hospitality, it represents an exchange of greetings with a stranger, who has unexpectedly become a guest, a friend; as a religious rite, it purchases, at the price of a sacrifice of modesty, the favors of God and the consecration of a priest; as a legal institution, it is established and practised in the manner of all trades: like all trades, it has its rights and its duties, it has its merchandise, its shops, and its customers; it buys and sells; like the most respectable of commercial enterprises, it has no other end than lucre and profit. If these three kinds of prostitution are to be classified under the head of moral and physical servitude, we must assume that Hospitality, Religion, and Law had violently created them, in spite

*Translator's Note:*—The "white-slave traffic" began to be heard of in the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries.

of all resistances and all the revolts of nature. But at no period has woman been such a slave that she was not mistress of her body, whether at the domestic fireside, in the sanctuaries of the temples, or in the lupanars of cities.

True prostitution began in the world on that day when woman sold herself as a commodity; and this traffic, like most, has been subjected to a multitude of varying conditions. When woman gave herself in obedience to the desires of her heart and the attractions of the flesh, that was love, that was pleasure; that was not prostitution, which weighs, calculates, which traffics and negotiates. Like pleasure, like love, prostitution goes back to the origin of peoples, to the infancy of societies.

In a state of simple nature, when men are beginning to seek each other out and form nations, promiscuity of the sexes is the inevitable result of a barbarism which has no other rule than instinct. The profound ignorance in which the human soul vegetates hides from it the elementary notions of good and evil. And in this manner, it was possible for prostitution to exist in those early times: the woman, in order to obtain from man a part of the game that he had killed or the fish he had caught, undoubtedly consented to give herself to ardors which she herself did not feel; for a pearly shell, for the bright feather of a bird, for a slug of brilliant metal, she would accord, without attraction and without pleasure, the privileges of love to a blind brutality. This savage prostitution, it may be seen, is antecedent to all religion, as it is to all legislation; and yet, from these early times of the infancy of nations, the woman did not give herself into servitude, but followed her own free will, her own choice, her own avaricious instincts. When the peoples have begun to collect into groups, when the social bond has divided them into families, when the need of love and of mutual aid has led to fixed and durable unions, the dogma of hospitality engenders another species of prostitution, which we must regard as equally antecedent to moral and religious laws. Hospitality was but the application of that precept, inborn, it may be, in the heart of man, and proceeding from an egoistic foresight rather than from a disinterested generosity, which led to the charity of the gospels: "Do to another what you would that he should do to you." As a matter of fact, in the forests where he lived, man felt the necessity of finding, always and everywhere, at the home of his equals, a place at the fire and at the table, when the chase or his wanderings led him far



from his own hut of branches and couch of beast-skins; and so it was a condition of general utility which made of hospitality a sacred dogma, an inviolable law. The guest, among all ancient peoples, was received with respect and joy. His arrival was looked upon as a good omen; his presence brought happiness to the roof that sheltered him. In exchange for this happy influence, which he brought with him, and which he left wherever he had passed, was it not but justice to put oneself out to please him and to be agreeable to him, each one according to his means? Hence arose that feeling of duty of which he was the object. The husband would voluntarily yield his bed and his wife to the guest whom the gods had brought him; and the woman, tamed to a custom which flattered her capricious curiosity, would lend herself with good grace to this, the most delicate act of hospitality. It is true that she was also led on by hope of a present which the stranger frequently would offer the next day as he took leave of her. This was not the only advantage which she drew from this authorized prostitution, a prostitution prescribed by her own relatives and her husband; she also ran the chance of receiving the caresses of a god or of a genius, who might make her a mother and endow her with a glorious progeny; for in all religions, in those of India as in those of Greece and Egypt, there was a universal belief in the passage and sojourn of gods among men, under human form. This traveler, this beggar, this deformed and ugly being, who became part of the family as soon as he had crossed the threshold of the house or tent, and who had been installed as master in the name of hospitality,—who knew but he might be Brahma, Osiris, Jupiter, or some god in disguise, who had descended among the mortals to view them more closely and to put them to the test? And would not the woman, in such a case, be purified by the embraces of a divinity? Such was the manner in which guest-prostitution, common to all primitive peoples, came to be perpetuated by custom and tradition in ancient civilization.

Sacred prostitution was almost contemporary with this first variety, which was, in a manner, one of the mysteries of the cult of hospitality. As soon as religions had been born, from the fear inspired in the heart of man by sight of the great commotions of nature, as soon as the volcano, the tempest, the thunderbolt, the earthquake and the angry sea had led him to invent gods, prostitution offered herself to those same terrible and implacable deities, and the priest took for himself an offering from which the gods represented would have been unable



to profit. Ignorant and credulous men brought to the altars everything they had that was most precious: the milk of their heifers, the blood and flesh of their bulls, the harvest of their fields, the product of the chase and line, and the works of their hands; and women, accordingly, were not slow in offering themselves as a sacrifice to the god, that is to say, to his idol or to his priest; priest or idol, it was one or the other which received the offering, sometimes of the virginity of the marriageable girl, sometimes of the modesty of the married woman. Pagan religions, born of hazard and caprice, were formulated in dogmas and principles, fashioned according to the manners and assimilated to the governments of political States: philosophers and priests had planned and carried out with intelligence this work of pious trickery, but they were careful not to cast any reflections on the hoary customs of sacred prostitution: they did nothing but regulate and direct its practice, which they surrounded with weird and secret ceremonies. Prostitution became, from then on, the essence of certain cults of gods and goddesses who ordained, tolerated or encouraged it. Hence sprang the mysteries of Lampsacus, of Babylon, of Paphos and of Memphis; hence, the infamous traffic which was carried on at the gates of temples; hence, those monstrous idols with which the virgins of India prostituted themselves; hence, the obscene dictatorship which the priests arrogated to themselves under the auspices of their impure divinities.

It was inevitable that prostitution should pass from religion over into manners and into laws; thence came that legal prostitution which rules society, and which, to this day, corrupts it to the core. This prostitution, a hundred times more dangerous than that hidden in the shadow of altars and of sacred groves, now began to show itself, without veils, to all eyes, and did not even take cover under the specious pretext of public necessity; it became for the young girl a form of debauchery which engenders all vices. It was then that legislators, struck by the risk which society was running, first had the courage to rise up against prostitution and to confine it within prudent bounds; some strove futilely to snuff it out and annihilate it, but they did not dare pursue it into those inviolable asylums offered it by religion, on certain feast days and on certain solemn occasions. Ceres, Bacchus, Venus and Priapus protected it against the authority of the magistrates, and moreover, it had penetrated so deeply the customs of the people that it would have been impossible to uproot it without tear-

ing up, at the same time, the roots of religious dogma. Only a new religion could come to aid the mission of the political legislator and cause sacred prostitution to disappear by imposing on legal prostitution a salutary bridle. This was the task of Christianity, which dethrones the senses and proclaims the triumph of spirit over matter.

Moreover, Jesus Christ, in his Gospel, had rehabilitated the courtesan by raising up the Magdalen, and by admitting this sinner to the banquet of the Divine Word; Jesus Christ had called to him the foolish as well as the wise virgins; but in inaugurating the era of repentance and expiation, he had taught modesty and continence. His apostles and their successors, in order to overthrow the false gods of immodesty, announced to the Christian world that the true God would only communicate with chaste souls and was to be incarnated only in bodies free from soil. At this advanced period of civilization, guest-prostitution no longer existed; sacred prostitution, blushing for the first time, was fleeing to its temples, where already a new, more moral and less sensual religion was disputing its province. Paganism, threatened and attacked on all sides, did not even attempt to defend, as one of its favorite forms, that prostitution which the public conscience now looked upon with horror. And so, sacred prostitution ceased to exist, at least openly, even before paganism had wholly abdicated its rites and its temples. The religion of the Gospel had taught its neophytes to respect themselves; chastity and continence were to be, from then on, obligatory virtues for all the world, in place of being, as they had been theretofore, the privilege of a few philosophers; prostitution no longer had excuse or occasion to put on a religious cloak and hide itself in some obscure corner of the sanctuary. And yet, it had, in the course of so many centuries, infiltrated itself so deeply into religious manners, it had procured so many hidden pleasures for the ministers of its altars, that it still continued to survive, here and there, in the interior of certain convents, and strove to find a place for itself in the indecent cult of certain saints. It was always Priapus whom an ignorant vulgarian adored under the name of St. Guignolet or of St. Grelichon; it was always, at the beginning of Christianity, sacred prostitution which placed sterile women into direct communication with the phallophoric statues of these pleasant but disreputable divinities.

But the noble morality of Christ had illuminated minds, assuaged passions, exalted sentiments and purified hearts. At the beginning of

this new faith, one might have believed that prostitution would be effaced in manners as in laws, and that it would not even be necessary to erect legal dams against the impurities of that muddy stream which St. Augustine compares to drains constructed in the most splendid palaces for carrying away miasmatic infection and assuring the salubrity of the air. The new society, which had been founded in the midst of the ancient world, and which was conducted at first according to the evangelic rule, waged a harsh warfare on prostitution, under whatever form the latter might dare to demand grace; bishops, synods and councils denounced it everywhere to the hatred of the faithful and forced it to take hiding in the shadows in order to escape pecuniary and corporal chastisement. But the wisdom of the Christian legislators had presumed too much on religious authority; they had been in too great haste to repress every impulse of carnal desire; they had not made allowance for instincts, tastes and temperaments; prostitution could not disappear without imperiling the peace and honor of good women. It was, from then on, to retire boldly to its own ignoble domains, and it often braved the law, which only tolerated it with regret, which restrained it within the most rigid boundaries, and which forced it to withdraw far from the gaze of honest folk. It was still Christianity which opposed to it the most real and respectable of barriers. Christianity, by making of marriage a serious and moral institution, and by elevating the condition of woman to an equality with that of the husband, who had taken her for a companion before God and man, condemned prostitution to live outside of society, in mysterious retreats and under the lash of public censure.

And yet, despite the rigors of the law, which tolerated it, but which threatened and pursued it unceasingly, prostitution led an existence none the less assured and none the less necessary; it had been expelled from the cities, but it found refuge in the suburbs, at the corners of streets, behind hedges and in the open country; it was distinguishable to the people by means of certain colors which were looked upon as infamous, by certain forms of clothing which it alone affected; and so, it carried on its abominable trade; it was a horror to the pious and modest ones, but it drew to itself young debauchees, perverse old men and those without any other profession. One might, therefore, say that it had never ceased to be or to lead its own way of life, even when the moral or religious scruples of a king, of a prince or a magistrate, had gone so far as to interdict it entirely, with the object of suppressing it

by means of an excessive penalty. Laws which proclaimed its abolition were not slow in being abolished themselves, and this odious social necessity remained constantly attached to the body of the nation, like an incurable ulcer, which medicine can only watch, with the object, where possible, of halting its progress. Such has been the rôle of prostitution for a number of centuries past, in all the countries in which there is a police at once watchful and intelligent. It is this which one may call legal prostitution; religion protects it, morality denounces it, the law authorizes it.

This legal prostitution comprises in its ranks not only those degraded creatures who avow and officially practice their abject profession, but also those women who, without any official qualification or diploma for abandoning themselves to the pleasures of a paying public, still make a commerce of their charms, in various degrees and under titles more or less respectable. There are, to tell the truth, two species of legal prostitution: that which has rights and a regular personal authorization; that which has no rights and is merely authorized by the silence of the law respecting it: the one dissimulated and disguised, the other patent and recognized. After this distinction between the two kinds of prostitutes who profit from the benefits of the civil law, one may realize how many different categories are to be found in that contraband prostitution to which the legislator has closed his eyes and which the moralist hesitates to give over to that opinion on which it may almost be said to depend. The more prostitution loses its special character of a customary traffic, the further is it removed from that pillar of legal infamy to which its destiny chains it; when it steps beyond the circle, still indefinite, of its own shameful commerce, it withdraws imperceptibly into the vague realms of gallantry and of pleasure. One may see that it is not easy to assign exact and fixed limits to legal prostitution, since one does not know, even, where it begins or where it ends.

But what ought to have been by this time clearly established in the minds of our readers is the enormous distance which separates ancient from modern prostitution. The latter, purely legal, tolerated rather than permitted, under the double censure of religion and morality; the former, on the contrary, equally condemned by philosophy, but consecrated by custom and by religious dogmas. Before the era of Christianity, prostitution was everywhere, under the domestic roof, in the temple and on the street-corners; under the rule of the Gospel,



it dares no longer show its face except at certain hours of the night, in segregated places and far from the homes of respectable citizens. Still later, in order to gain the right to appear in the light of day, and by way of escaping the police, it takes to itself employments, costumes and names which offend neither eyes nor ears, and it fashions for itself a mask of decency, in order to have the privilege of exercising its trade freely, without control and without surveillance. But always, even when the law is powerless or mute, opinion protests against the hypocritical metamorphoses of legal prostitution.

We have already said enough on this subject to make clear the plan of this work, the fruit of long researches and of studies absolutely new. As for its purpose, we do not believe it would be useful to insist upon making it understood; in the face of such a subject, a writer who respects himself as much as he respects his readers must have for object the making of vice detestable, even when vice presents itself under the most seducing forms. It is enough to render vice hateful to portray its sorrowful consequences and to point out the impressive lessons which may be drawn from them. Our work is not a book of austere and cold morality; it is a curious history, full of nude pictures which we shall endeavor to veil, especially those which are furnished us in such abundance by the Greek and Roman authors. But at all periods and in all countries, one perceives that the wise teachings of philosophers and legislators have been a protest against the encroachments of sensual passions. Moses inscribed chastity in the code which he gave the Hebrews; Solon and Lycurgus inveighed against prostitution in a country which was the home of voluptuous courtezans; the Roman senate flayed debauchery in the face of the unclean mysteries of Isis and of Venus; Charlemagne, Saint Louis, all the kings who have looked upon themselves as the shepherds of men, in accordance with the beautiful expression of Homer, have labored to purify the manners of their peoples and to confine prostitution to an obscure and abject servitude. This was but the vigilant action of the law. But at the same time, philosophy, in its lessons and its writings, was preaching continence and modesty; Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero lent a captivating or persuasive voice to the purest morality. When the Gospel had rehabilitated marriage and chastity had become a religious prescription, Christian philosophy could only repeat the counsels of the pagan philosophers. For eighteen centuries, the pulpit of Jesus Christ thundered and inveighed against the den of prostitution. On



the one hand, mire and darkness; on the other, a holy stream, in which hearts were washed free of stain, a vivifying light which comes from God.

This book is divided into four parts, the total of which will present the complete history of prostitution in ancient and modern times, as well as among all peoples.

In the first part, we shall view prostitution under its three particular forms, following the laws of hospitality, of religion and of the state; this part includes only Greek and Roman antiquity. The sources and the materials are so abundant and so rich for this first part that it alone, if one were to follow out all the implications, might be extended to a number of volumes. The Letters of Alciphron, the *Deipnosophistes* of Athenæus and the Dialogues of Lucian cause us to regret the loss of those other historical treatises which Gorgias, Antiphanes, Apollodorus, Aristophanes and other Greek writers compiled on the life and manners of courtezans or hetairai. Meursius, Musonius and a number of modern scholars, among others, Professor Jacobs of Gotha, have regarded this subject as not unworthy of grave dissertations. Ancient Rome has left us no book devoted especially to the subject, with which, however, it was not unfamiliar; but the Latin authors, principally the poets, provide us with more material than we are able to make use of. Moreover, a number of savants with names ending in *us*, like Laurentius, Choveronius, etc., have compiled dissertations on the hidden phases of Roman prostitution. We have so little to say about prostitution among the Egyptians, among the Jews and the Babylonians, that we have had no hesitancy in attaching to the section dealing with Greek antiquities the chapters which we have consecrated to these other ancient peoples, although among the peoples mentioned guest-prostitution left profound traces.

The second part of our work, the most considerable and the most interesting of the four, is devoted entirely to France. Here, we shall follow step by step, province by province, city by city, the history of prostitution from the Gauls to our own day. We shall encounter a number of traces, barely recognizable, of sacred prostitution; but it is legal prostitution which, in this part of the work, is to be brought to light from the history of jurisprudence, the police, religion and manners. This subject, a highly moral one, has never been treated except for the contemporary period; Parent-Duchatelet, who was an observer and not an historian and archæologist, has only viewed and judged

prostitution from the point of view of public administration, hygiene and statistics. Works of the same genre as his, published by A. Beraud and by Sabatier, present us with a few historical facts beyond those contained in the voluminous treatise, *De la Prostitution dans la ville de Paris*, but they are possessed of little importance, except from the point of view of legislation. A comprehensive history of manners is yet to be written; and in our undertaking, we have drawn fragment after fragment from the historians, the chroniclers, the poets and all authors who have registered in passing, a fact, a detail or an observation relative to a subject so vast and so complex as that which we are here approaching for the first time. A few pages of the *Traité de la Police* of De la Marre and of the *Répertoire de Jurisprudence* of Merlin; passages in the Encyclopædias and similar collections; that is all that exists upon the subject, prior to the learned monograph which M. Rabutaux has just published, as an appendix to the great work entitled *Le Moyen Âge et la Renaissance*. M. Rabutaux has limited his erudite labors to what he calls the *service des mœurs*. We shall add the history of prostitution in France, with a picture, toned down to some degree, of its exterior characteristics and its secret cults, after the most authentic documents. We shall penetrate, the torch of science in our hand, the hutches of the *rue Baillet-Latour* or the *rue Huleu*; we shall be introduced, by the erotics of the eighteenth century, into the *petites maisons* of the *impures*; we shall slip into the royal groves of the Parc-aux-Cerfs; we shall descend, hiding our faces as we do so, into the infected holes of the Palais-Royal; and always and everywhere, we shall write upon the wall, in letters of fire, this inscription, more intelligible than the one which was written up at the feast of Belshazzar: *Without manners, there is neither God, nor country, nor peace, nor happiness.*

The third part of this work is reserved for the history of prostitution in the rest of Europe. Italy, Spain, England, Germany, etc., shall bring in turn their contribution of singular facts for this gallery of manners, which we shall see change in accordance with the time and country. The materials for this part of our work are widely dispersed, like those concerning France, and have never been collected, with the exception of a very remarkable treatise called forth by the monstrous features of prostitution in London. Its author, Ryan, is only concerned with what he has seen, and the history of the past is not visible to him. Spain, with its *Celestine*, makes us acquainted with that

learned and refined prostitution which it has learned, certainly, from the bitter experience of Italy. It is to Italy, the brilliant *gynæceum* of courtezans and ruffians, that we shall have to turn for the origin of that terrible plague of love, which the Italians of the sixteenth century had the effrontery to name the French plague, as if Charles the Eighth had not gone to contract it at Naples. We shall make it a point not to forget Laponia which is the sole place in Europe where guest-prostitution is still practiced today.

Finally, the fourth part of this history\*, frequently a saddening, heart-breaking one, shall take us into all the countries outside of Europe: to Asia, to Africa, to America; and we shall meet everywhere, in civilized India as among the savages of the South Sea, with the three principal forms of prostitution: hospitable, sacred and legal. This last form will show itself more rarely than the other two, before modern civilization has passed its spirit-level over the religious and domestic manners of the four parts of the world. The religions of India, the hospitality of Otaïti, the legislation concerning *filles publiques* in the United States, will give rise to contrasts which the distance of time and place will only render the more interesting for the observer. We shall search in vain for a people who have not accepted, as a necessary scourge, the leprosy of prostitution.

The reading of our work, we persist in asserting in advance, will be a grave lesson and a real utility. One will learn from it, above all, to thank Providence for permitting us to live in an age in which prostitution as a custom is being wiped out, and in which sentiments of honor and of virtue are being born of their own accord in our hearts. One must have seen what prostitution was like among our fathers in order to judge of the social ameliorations which every day brings, and of which the future is yet to feel the benefits. Prostitution is a public malady: to describe symptoms and to study causes is to prepare the remedy.

Pierre DUFOUR.

15th. April, 1851, from my hermitage at Saint-Claude.

\*Lacroix does not carry out the original plan of his work. As it stands, the *Histoire* is divided into three parts, the fourth being missing.

# HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION

## PART ONE

### ANTIQUITY: GREECE AND ROME





## CHAPTER I

IT IS in Chaldea, the ancient cradle of human society, that one must look for the first traces of Prostitution. A part of Chaldea, that which touches Mesopotamia on the north and which includes the land of Ur, the country of Abraham, had for inhabitants a warlike and savage race, living amid mountains and knowing no other art than that of the chase. These huntsman folk were the inventors of hospitality, and of Prostitution, which was, in some sort, the naïve and brutal expression of the former. In the other part of Chaldea, which was bounded by the Arabian desert, and which stretched away in fertile plains and rich pastures, a shepherd people of gentle and pacific nature led a wandering life amid their countless herds. They observed the stars, they created the sciences, they invented religions, and, with the latter, Sacred Prostitution. When Nimrod, the conquering king, whom the Bible calls a great hunter before God, reunited under his laws the two provinces and the two peoples of Chaldea, when he founded Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates, in the year of the world 1402, according to the books of Moses, he permitted a mixture of beliefs, ideas, and manners among the different races who were his subjects, and he had no hand in the fusion, which occurred leisurely, under the influence of custom. Thus it was, Sacred Prostitution and Guest Prostitution soon came to signify but one and the same thing in the minds of the Babylonians, and the two became simultaneously one of the most characteristic forms of the cult of Venus or Mylitta.

Hear Herodotus, the venerable Father of History and the oldest collector of the traditions of the world: "The Babylonians have a very shameful law: every woman born in the land is obliged, once in her life, to repair to the Temple of Venus to give herself to a stranger. A number among them, proud of their riches and disdaining to mingle with the others, have themselves brought to the temple in covered chariots. There they remain seated, with, behind them, a great number of domestics who have accompanied them; but most of the others take their seats in the piece of land adjoining the Temple of Venus, with a crown of fig-leaves about the head. They come and go. One sees lanes separated by ropes which have been stretched; the strangers

walk up and down in these lanes and choose the women who please them most. When a woman has taken her place in this line, she is not permitted to return home until some stranger has cast silver upon her knees and has had intercourse with her outside the sacred place. It is required that the stranger, in casting the silver say to her: 'I invoke the goddess Mylitta.' Now the Assyrians give to Venus the name of Mylitta. However modest the sum, it cannot be refused: the law forbids it, for this silver becomes sacred. She follows the first one who tosses her silver, and it is not permitted her to repulse anyone. Finally, when she has been acquitted of what she owed the goddess, by abandoning herself to a stranger, she returns home; after that, whatever sum anyone gives her, it is not possible to seduce her. Those who have an elegant figure and beauty do not remain long in the temple, but the ugly ones do, because they are not able to satisfy the law. There are even some who remain three or four years." (Book I, i, 99.)

This Sacred Prostitution, identified with the cult of Mylitta, or Venus Uranios, in the island of Cyprus and in Phoenicia, is one of the facts of history, however monstrous, weird and unlikely it may appear. The prophet Baruch, whom Herodotus had not consulted, and who lamented with Jeremiah two centuries before the Greek historian, tells of the same turpitudes in the letter of Jeremiah to the Jews whom the king Nebuchadnezzar had led in captivity to Babylon: "Women, wrapped in ropes, take their seats along the roads and burn perfumes (*succedentes ossa olivarum*). When one of them, selected by some passerby, has slept with him, she reproaches her neighbor with not having been adjudged worthy, like herself, of being possessed by the man and with not yet having broken her girdle of cords." (Baruch, Chapter VI.)

This girdle of cords, these knots, which bound the body of the woman vowed to Venus, represented the modesty which held her back by a fragile bond, and which love's impetuosity was soon to break. It was necessary, then, that one who wanted to cohabit with one of these consecrated women should seize the extremity of the cord which bound her, and so draw his conquest under the cedars, which lent their shade to the consummation of the mystery. The sacrifice to Venus was better received by the goddess when one who offered it, in his amorous transports, broke all the bonds which were in the way. But the savants who have commentated this famous passage of

Baruch are not in agreement as to the kind of offering which the consecrated ones burned in front of them in order to win the favor of Venus. According to some, it was a cheese-cake; according to others, it was a philtre, which inflamed the desires and prepared the way for pleasure; or, in accordance with a more natural explanation, it was nothing more than perfumed bays.

Herodotus had seen with his own eyes, about the year 440 B. C., Sacred Prostitution among the women of Babylon; as a stranger, no doubt, he had cast silver on the knees of some beautiful Babylonian. Three centuries and a half after him, another traveler, Strabo, also bore witness to these disorderly practices, and the latter tells us that all the women of Babylon obeyed the oracle by giving their bodies to a stranger whom they looked upon as a guest: *Mos est. . . cum hospite corpus miscere*, says the Latin translation of his *Geography*, written in Greek. This Prostitution never took place except in a single temple in which it had found a home installed from the early days of Babylon. The Temple of Mylitta had been too small to hold all the goddess' worshipers; but there was about this temple a vast enclosure which was part of it, and which walled in the pavilions, the groves, the pools and gardens. This was the field of Prostitution. The women who abandoned themselves were here upon sacred ground, where the eyes of father or husband could not come to trouble them. Herodotus and Strabo do not speak of the part which the priest reserved for himself in these offerings of the pious followers of Mylitta; but Baruch pictures the priests of Babylon for us as the sort who would refuse nothing.

One understands how the constant spectacle of Sacred Prostitution must have corrupted the manners of Babylon. In short, this immense city, peopled with several million men spread over a space of fifteen leagues, soon became a place of frightful debauchery. It was destroyed in part by the Persians, who captured it in the year 331 B. C.; but the ruin of many great edifices, the sacking of the palace and the tombs, and the destruction of the walls were not enough to purify the air of the plague of Prostitution, which perpetuated itself here as in its true Fatherland, so long as there was a roof to shelter it. Alexander the Great himself had been terrified by Babylonian debauchery, when he went there to take part in it and to die. "There is none other more corrupt than this people," reports Quintus Curtius, one of the historians of the conqueror of Babylon, "or none other more learned in the

art of pleasure and voluptuousness. Fathers and mothers suffered their daughters to prostitute themselves to their guests for silver, and husbands were not less indulgent with respect to their wives. The Babylonians plunged into drunkenness and all the disorders which follow it. The women appeared at their banquets modestly at first; but they ended by abandoning their robes, then the rest of their garments, one after another, disrobing themselves little by little of modesty, until they were entirely naked. And these were not public women who abandoned themselves so; they were the most respectable of matrons and their daughters."

The example of Babylon had borne fruit, and the cult of Mylitta had been propagated, with the Prostitution which accompanied it, in Asia and in Africa, even to the interior of Egypt, as of Persia; but in each of these countries the goddess took a new name and her cult affected new forms, under which there always reappeared Sacred Prostitution.

In Armenia, they adored Venus under the name of Anaïtis; they had erected a temple to her, like the one which Mylitta had at Babylon. About this temple there extended a vast domain, enclosed in which there lived a population devoted to the rites of the goddess. Strangers alone had the right to pass the threshold of this species of seraglio of the two sexes, and to demand a gallant hospitality, which was never refused them. Whoever was admitted into this amorous city must, in accordance with antique usage, purchase by means of a present the favors which were to be shown him; but as there is no custom which does not fall sooner or later into desuetude in a period of decadence, the woman whom the guest of Venus had honored with his caresses forced the guest often to accept a more considerable gift than the one which she had received from him. Those in this sacred enclosure were the sons and daughters of the best families of the country; and they entered the service of the goddess for a longer or a shorter period of time, in accordance with their parents' vow. When the daughters came forth from the temple of Anaïtis; leaving behind them on its altars all they had gained by the sweat of their bodies, they had no cause to blush at the trade they had taken for their own, nor did they lack for husbands, who went to the temple to receive information about the religious antecedents of the young priestesses. Those who had received the greatest number of strangers were the most sought after in marriage. It should be remarked also that, in the cult of



Anaïtis, there was so far as possible a division according to age, face, and condition of the lovers, in such a manner as to satisfy both the goddess and her worshipers. It is Strabo who has preserved for us this pleasing detail, which we shall not meet with among the rites of the other Venuses.

These different Venuses were scattered throughout all Syria, and they had everywhere established their cult of Prostitution, with certain variations of ceremonial. Venus, under her diverse names, personified and deified the organ of the woman, the feminine conception, the female nature. It was, therefore, quite simple to deify and to personify also the organ of the man, the masculine act of generation, the male nature. The men had instituted the cult of Venus; the women instituted that of Adonis, which became as it materialized that of Priapus. One sees in antiquity these two cults flourishing one beside the other. It is, above all, to the Phœnicians that one must attribute the propagation of these cults, which often form but a single cult, one being mingled with the other. The Venus of the Phœnicians was called Astarte; she had temples at Tyre, Sidon, and in the principal cities of Phœnicia; but the most celebrated were those of Heliopolis in Syria and of the region near Mount Lebanon. Astarte in her statues had two sexes, representing at once Venus and Adonis. This mixture of the two sexes was translated into a travesty of women by the men and of men by the women in the nocturnal festivals of the goddess. The most infamous debauches took place under cover of these disguises. And the priest himself directed the ceremony, to the sound of musical instruments, of drums and tambours. This monstrous promiscuity which took place under the auspices of the *good goddess* led to a multitude of children who never knew their fathers, and who at a very tender age came back to find their mothers again in the mysteries of Astarte. There was, however, in all this a species of marriage, beyond Sacred Prostitution, to which men as well as women lent themselves; the Phœnicians, according to the testimony of Eusebius, prostituted their virgin daughters to strangers, to the greater glory of hospitality. These turpitudes, which are not to be absolved on the ground of their antiquity, continued to the fourth century of the vulgar era, and it was necessary for Constantine the Great to take them in hand, interdicting them by law, destroying the temples of Astarte, and replacing with a Christian church the one which dishonored Heliopolis.

This Astarte, whom the Bible calls the *goddess of the Sidonians*, found altars not less impure in the Island of Cyprus, where the Phœnicians of Ascalon early imported Sacred Prostitution along with their commerce and industry. It was said that Venus, born of the sea, like the brilliant planet, Urania, whom the Chaldean burghers beheld on fine summer nights, had chosen for her terrestrial empire this Island of Cyprus, and that the gods, at her birth, had assigned her this as her share, as we learn from the Greek tradition through the mouth of Homer. This was the Astarte of the Phœnicians, the Urania of the Babylonians: she had in her island twenty renowned temples; the two principal ones were those of Paphus and of Amathus, where Sacred Prostitution was practiced on a greater scale than anywhere else. And yet, the daughters of Amathus had been chaste, and even obstinate in their chastity, when Venus was cast up on their shores by the spume of the waves; they despised this new goddess who appeared to them quite naked, and the irritated goddess thereupon ordered them to prostitute themselves to every comer to expiate the bad reception which they had given her: they obeyed with so much repugnance the orders of Venus that the protectress of loves changed them into stones. This was a lesson from which the daughters of Cyprus profited; they vowed themselves, from then on, to Prostitution in honor of their goddess, and they would walk of an evening by the shores of the sea to sell themselves to strangers who arrived at the island. This was so in the second century, at the time of Justinian, who tells us of these promenades of the young maidens of Cyprus upon the seashore. But at this period, the product of their Prostitution was not deposited, as it had been in the beginning, upon the altar of their goddess; this disreputable salary was put into a coffer to form the *dot* which they were to bring their husbands, and which the latter unblushingly accepted.

As to the festivals of Venus, which attracted to Cyprus an innumerable throng of zealous worshipers, they were no less accompanied by the acts and emblems of Prostitution. To King Cinyras is commonly attributed the foundation of the temple of Paphos, and the priests of the place let it be understood that the mistress of this king, a woman named Cypris, had won such a reputation for cleverness in matters of love that the goddess had wanted to give her her own name. This Venus who was adored at Paphos was, then, the image of the female nature, the same as Mylitta of Babylon; also, in the sacrifices which



were offered to her, there was presented, under the name of *Carposis*, which signified *First Fruits*, a phallus or a piece of money. The initiate did not confine themselves to allegory. The goddess was represented at first by a comb or pyramid of white stone, which was later transformed into the statue of a woman. The statue of the temple of Amathus, on the contrary, represented a bearded woman with the attributes of a man under her feminine clothes; this Venus was a Hermaphrodite, according to Macrobius (*putant eandem marem ac dominam esse*); that is why Catullus invokes her by calling her *the double goddess of Amathus* (*duplex Amathusia*). The most secret mysteries of this Astarte took place in the private wood which surrounded her temple, and in this wood, which was always green, might be heard the sigh of the *iyinx*, the bird dedicated to the goddess. This bird, the flesh of which was employed by magicians in making their amorous philtres, was none other than our own common wagtail; if it came to us from Cyprus, it has had time to undergo a metamorphosis on the way. This charming island had yet other temples in which the followers of Venus observed the same rite: at Tamassus, at Aphrodisium, and above all at Idalium, Sacred Prostitution found the same pretext if not the same forms.

From Cyprus, it conquered in succession all the islands of the Mediterranean; it made its way into Greece and into Italy; the marine commerce of the Phœnicians carried it everywhere they were able to pick up or unload merchandise. But each race, in accepting a cult which appealed to its passion, added to that cult certain features determined by its own manners and character. In the Phœnician colonies, Sacred Prostitution preserved the customs based upon money and mercantilism which distinguished this race of merchants; at Sicca-Veneria, in the district of Carthage, the temple of Venus, which in the language of Tyre was called *Succoth Benoth*, or the *Tents of Young Girls*, was, as a matter of fact, an asylum for Prostitution, to which the daughters of the country went to earn their dowries by the pain of their bodies (*injuria corporis*, says Valerius Maximus); they were all the more respectable as women after having plied this vile trade, and they married all the better for it. One may deduce from certain passages in the Bible that this temple, like those of Astarte at Sidon and Ascalon, was wholly surrounded by small tents, in which the young Carthaginian maidens sacrificed themselves to the Phœnician Venus. They came there from all sides in such great numbers

that they were in each other's way, and were not able to return to Carthage as quickly as they should have liked in order to find husbands. The temples of Venus were situated ordinarily in high places, commanding a view of the sea, so that mariners, tired from long voyages, might see from afar, like a Pharos, the white abode of the goddess, which promised them pleasure and repose. It is easy to understand that Guest-Prostitution was first established for the benefit of mariners along the coasts which they frequented. This Prostitution became sacred, when the priest chose to have his part in it and to cast over it, in a manner, the goddess' protecting veil. St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, has set forth precisely the principal characteristics of the cult of Venus, by maintaining that there were three Venuses rather than one: the Venus of the virgins; the Venus of the married women; and the Venus of the courtezans; such was the threefold nature of this immodest divinity, to whom the Phœnicians, the Saint tells us, immolated the modesty of their daughters before marriage.

All Asia Minor embraced with transport a cult which deified the senses and the carnal appetites, the cult which often associated Venus and Adonis. Adonis, to whom the Hebrews gave the name of God, creator of the world (*adonai*), personified the male nature, without which the female nature is powerless. In the same manner, in the funereal festivals which were celebrated in honor of a hero of the chase, slain by an enemy and wept by Venus, his divine lover, we see a symbol of the exhaustion of the physical and material forces as the result of abuse, forces which are only to be revived after a period of absolute rest. In the course of these festivals, which were much celebrated at Byblos in Syria, and which brought an immense and cosmopolitan throng to the temple of Venus, the women sacrificed their hair or their modesty to the goddess. Hence came the Festival of Sorrow, in the course of which one wept for Adonis, one striking another with his hand or with wands; this was followed by the Festival of Joy, which announced the resurrection of Adonis; then there was exposed in the open air, in the portico of the temple, the phallographic statue of the resuscitated god; and at once, every woman present was obliged to surrender her locks to the razor or her body to Prostitution. Those who preferred to keep their hair were parked in a sort of market which only strangers had the privilege of entering; they remained there *for sale*, as Lucian says, for a whole day, and they

abandoned themselves to this shameful traffic as often as anyone was willing to pay them. All the silver which came from this laborious day was afterwards employed in making sacrifices to Venus; it was thus that the loves of the Goddess and Adonis were solemnized. One may be astonished that the inhabitants of a land should be so given over to a cult in which their women had all the benefits of the mysteries of Venus; but it must be remarked that strangers were no less interested than women in these mysteries, which appeared to have been instituted expressly for their benefit. The cult of Venus was, then, in a way, a sedative for the women, a nomadic experience for the men, since the latter could visit in turn the various festivals and temples of the goddess, profiting everywhere, in these voluptuous pilgrimages, from the advantages reserved for guests and strangers.

Everywhere, in short, in Asia Minor, there were temples of Venus, and Sacred Prostitution everywhere held sway at the festivals of the Goddess, whether the latter took to herself the name of Mylitta, Anaïtis, Astarte, Urania, Mithra, or some other symbolic appellation. There were in the Hellespont, at Zela and at Comana, two temples of Venus Anaïtis which drew to their solemnities a multitude of fervent worshippers. These temples were prodigiously enriched with the silver of these debauchees, who came from all regions to accomplish their vows (*causa votorum*, says Strabo). During the festivals, the approaches to the temple at Comana resembled a vast field, peopled with men of all nations, presenting a startling mixture of languages and costumes. The women who sacrificed themselves to the goddess and who made silver of their bodies (*corpore quæstum facientes*) were as numerous as at Corinth, Strabo, who had been a witness of this affluence, tells us elsewhere. It was the same at Susa and at Ecbatana in Media, among the Parthians, who were the pupils and imitators of the Persians in the matter of sensuality and lust, and even among the Amazons, who abandoned their customary chastity, by introducing strange disorders into the worship of their Venus, whom they, nevertheless, named Artemis, the Chaste. But it was in Lydia that Sacred Prostitution entered the most deeply into matters. These Lydians, who boasted of having invented all the games of chance, and who gave themselves to such pursuits with a sort of fury, lived in a state of ease which was a perpetual incentive to debauchery. To them, every pleasure was good, without need of any religious pretext or the occasion of a sacred festival. They were glad enough to worship Venus, with all

the impurities which had found their way into her cult; but in addition to this, their daughters vowed themselves to Venus, and practiced on their own account the most shocking Prostitution: "They gain their dowry," says Herodotus, "and then continue this commerce even after they are married." This dowry so dishonorably acquired gave them the right to choose a husband who did not always have the right to refuse the honor of such a choice. It appears the Lydian girls did not do a bad business, for when there came question of erecting a tomb to their King, Alyattes, father of Cræsus, they contributed to the expense, along with the merchants and artisans of Lydia. This tomb was magnificent, and the commemorative inscriptions indicated the part which each of the three trades bore in its construction; the courtezans had furnished a considerable sum and had built a portion of the monument a good deal more extensive than those built with the contributions of the artisans and the merchants.

The Lydians, having been subjugated by the Persians, communicated to their conquerors the poison of Prostitution. The Lydians, who had in their armies a throng of female dancers and musicians, marvelously trained in the art of voluptuousness, taught the Persians to make use of these women who played the lyre, the tambour, the flute, and the psaltery. Music became then the adjunct of debauchery, and there was no great banquet at which drunkenness and debauchery were not stimulated by the sound of instruments and by the obscene songs and lascivious dances of courtezans. This shameful spectacle, these preludes to an unbridled orgy, were carried on by the ancient Persians, even in the sight of their legitimate wives and their daughters, who came to take their place at the festival, without veils and crowned with flowers, they who ordinarily lived shut up in the interior of their homes, never going out unveiled, even to the temple of Mithra, the Venus of the Persians. Heated by wine, animated by music, exalted by the voluptuous pantomime of the musicians, these virgins, these matrons, these wives soon lost all restraint, and accepted, returned and provoked the most dishonorable advances in the presence of their fathers, their husbands, their brothers and their children. Ages, sexes and social classes were confounded under the influence of a general vertigo; songs, cries, and dances redoubled in intensity, and Modesty, whose eyes and ears were no longer respected, fled, wrapping herself in the folds of her robe. A horrible promiscuity followed this debauchery in the festival hall which became an infamous brothel.



The banquet and its libidinous accompaniments were prolonged until the dawn had caused the torches to grow pale and the semi-nude guests had fallen pell-mell to sleep upon couches of silver and of ivory. Such is the picture which Macrobius and Athenæus give us of these libidinous festivals, which Plutarch endeavors to tone down a little by asserting that the Persians were a little too much given to imitation of the Parthians, who abandoned themselves unrestrainedly to all the allurements of music and of wine.

For the rest, from the earliest antiquity, the kings of Persia had thousands of musician-concubines attached to their suites; and Parmenio, the general of Alexander of Macedonia, found in the train of Darius three hundred twenty-nine who had remained there after the defeat of Arbela, with two hundred seventy-seven cooks, forty-six crown-plaiters and forty perfumers, as the last remnants of that monarch's power and luxury.



## CHAPTER II

EGYPT, despite its sages, despite its priests who taught it morality, was, nevertheless, not exempt from the plague of Prostitution; she was too near the Phœnicians and had too many trade relations with the latter not to adopt something of a religion which came, like purple incense, from Tyre and Sidon. She left the dogma, taking only the cult, and while Venus had no altars under her own name in the empire of Isis and Osiris, Prostitution, from the most remote times, flourished almost publicly in Egypt's cities, even more than in the sanctuaries of her temples. This was not Guest-Prostitution: the domestic fireside of the Egyptians remained always inaccessible to strangers, on account of the horror which the latter inspired; this was not Sacred Prostitution, for in giving themselves for such a purpose, her women were not accomplishing an act of religion: this was legal Prostitution, in all its primitive naïveté. The laws authorized, protected and even justified the carrying on of this infamous commerce; a woman sold herself as if she had been a piece of merchandise, and the man who bought her for a fixed price excused, or at least did not blame, the odious traffic which she accepted only out of avarice. The Egyptian woman showed herself as eager for money as the Phœnician, but she did not take the trouble to conceal her cupidity under the appearances of a religious rite. She also was of a very ardent nature, as if the fires of her Ethiopian sun had passed into her senses; she possessed above all, if we are to believe Ctesias, whose testimony Athenæus invokes, incomparable qualities and talents for exciting, inflaming and satisfying the passions which were directed toward her; but all this was but a means of gain. Then, too, courtezans of Egypt had a reputation which they were forced to maintain throughout the entire world.

The Egyptian religion, like all the religions of antiquity, had deified fecund and generative nature under the name of Isis and Osiris. These were, in the beginning, the sole divinities of Egypt: Osiris or the Sun represented the principle of male life; Isis or the Earth the principle of female life. Apuleius, who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Goddess, has her speak in this language: "I am Nature, mother of all things, sovereign of all the elements, the beginning of centuries,

the first of divinities, the queen of shades, the most ancient inhabitant of the heavens, the uniform image of gods and of goddesses. . . . I am the sole divinity revered in the universe under numerous forms, with varying ceremonies and under different names. The Phœnicians call me the Mother of the Gods; the Cyprians call me Venus of Paphus. . . .” Isis was, then, but another Venus, and her mysterious cult recalled, through a host of allegories, the rôle which woman or the female nature plays in the universe. As to Osiris, her husband, what was he but the emblem of the man or the male nature, who has need of intercourse with the female nature, which he fecundates in order to engender and create? The bull and the cow were, then, the symbols of Isis and Osiris. The priests of the goddess bore in her ceremonies the mysterious van which received grain and bran, but which kept only the first, rejecting the second; the priests of the god bore the sacred bull, or the key which opens the most firmly closed locks. This bull represented the organ of the man, the van the organ of the woman. There was also the eye, with or without brows, which was placed alongside the bull among the attributes of Osiris, in order to simulate the attraction of the two sexes. In the same way, in the processions of Isis, immediately after the nursing cow, came consecrated young girls, called *Cistophores*, bearing the mystic cist, a basket of rushes containing round or oval cakes with a hole in the middle; after these *Cistophores* came a priestess hiding in her breast a little golden urn, containing the phallus which was, according to Apuleius, “the worshipful image of the supreme divinity and the instrument of the most secret mysteries.” This phallus, which reappeared incessantly and under all forms in the Egyptian cult, was a figurative representation of a part of the body of Osiris, the part which Isis had not been able to find when she conjugally reassembled the scattered members of her husband, who had been slain and mutilated by the odious Typhon, the victim’s brother. One might, then, judge of the cult of Isis and Osiris by these subjects which were its mysterious symbols. It was inevitable that Prostitution in connection with such a cult should be very widely prevalent; but it was certainly, at least in the first stages, reserved to the priest, who found in it one of the most productive sources of revenue for his order. It was a shameless accompaniment of those initiations, to which the necessary prelude were ablutions, repose and continence. The god and the goddess had bestowed plenipotentary powers upon these ministers, who employed those powers quite

materially, in the course of their duties, which had to do with initiating into these infamous debauches the neophytes of both sexes. St. Epiphanius positively states that these occult ceremonies contained an allusion to the manners of men before the establishment of society. They were, accordingly, marked by promiscuity of the sexes and all the disorders of the grossest libertinism. Herodotus tells us of the preparations which were made for the festivals of Isis, worshiped in the city of Bubastis under the name of Diana: "They all take to the water," he says, "men and women, in pell-mell confusion; in each boat there is a great number of persons of one or the other sex. While they are sailing, some of the women play castanets and some of the men the flute; the rest, men and women, sing and clap their hands. When they approach a city, they draw the boat to the bank. Of the women, some continue to play their castanets while others cry out, with all their might, insults to the women of the city; these latter begin to dance and the former, remaining standing, indecently draw up their robes." These obscenities were but a counterpart of those which were to take place in the neighborhood of the temple, where each year seven hundred thousand pilgrims came to give themselves over to unbelievable excesses.

The horrible excesses to which the cult of Isis gave rise found a hiding-place in the subterranean vaults, which the initiate was not permitted to enter until after a time of tests and purification. Herodotus, to whom the Egyptian priests had confidentially revealed the nature of this Prostitution, says enough about it to enable us to divine from his reticences what he does not say: "The Egyptians are the first who, out of religious scruple, forbade one to have commerce with women in the sacred places, or even to enter these places after having had such commerce, without first having been washed clean. Almost all the other peoples, if one excepts the Egyptians and the Greeks, have commerce in the sacred places, or at least, they afterwards enter these places, without being washed. The Egyptians believe that men are like other animals. One sees, according to them, the beasts and the different species of birds copulating in the temples and in other places consecrated to the gods; and if this action were disagreeable to the divinity, even the beasts would not commit it." Herodotus, who does not approve this course of reasoning, refrains from betraying the secrets of the Egyptian priests, whose confidence he had enjoyed at Memphis, at Heliopolis and at Thebes. He makes us acquainted only

indirectly with the public and private manners of Egypt; but from certain details which he gives in passing, one may judge that, among that ancient people, corruption had reached a climax. It was also the practice not to give the embalmers the bodies of young and beautiful women until three or four days after their death, and the reason for this was the fear that the embalmers might abuse the corpses. "There is a tale," says Herodotus, "that one was caught in the act with a woman who had recently died."

The history of the kings of Egypt affords us also, in the works of Herodotus, two strange examples of legal Prostitution. Rhampsinitus or Rameses, who reigned about 2244 B. C., wishing to discover the cunning thief who had pillaged his treasury, "resorted to a thing which to me was unbelievable," says Herodotus, whose credulity had often enough been put to the test: "He prostituted his own daughter, ordering her to seat herself in a place of debauchery, there to receive equally all the men who presented themselves to her, but to oblige them, before according them her favors, to tell her what they had done in their life that was most subtle and most wicked." The thief cut off the arm of a dead man, placed it under his cloak, and went to pay a visit to the king's daughter. He did not fail to boast of being the perpetrator of the theft; the princess attempted to have him arrested, but, as they were in darkness, she seized only the arm of the dead man, while the live one reached the door. This new and clever trick so commended him to the esteem of Rhampsinitus that the king pardoned the thief and ended by marrying him to the one whose acquaintance the robber had made in an evil place. This poor princess, no doubt, came out of the affair in a better state than did the daughter of Cheops, who was king of Egypt twelve centuries before Christ. Cheops caused to be constructed the great pyramid, which cost twenty years of labor and an incalculable outlay of money. "Drained by these expenses," reports Herodotus, "he came to such a point of infamy as to prostitute his own daughter in a place of debauchery and to order her to exact of her lovers a certain sum of silver. I do not know what was the amount of this sum; the priests did not tell me. She not only carried out her father's orders, but she also wanted to leave a monument for herself; and so, she besought each one who came to see her to present her with a stone for the work which she contemplated. It was with these stones, the priests told me, that they built the pyramid which is the center of the three." Modern science



has not yet calculated how many stones it took to build that pyramid.

The erection of a pyramid, however costly it may have been, seems not to have been beyond the means of a courtesan. And accordingly, despite chronology and history, the construction of the pyramid of Mycerinus is generally attributed to the courtesan Rhodopis. This courtesan was not Egyptian by birth, but she had made her fortune with the Egyptians a long time after the reign of Mycerinus. Rhodopis, who lived under Amasis, 600 B. C., was originally of Thrace; she had been the companion in slavery of Aesop, the fabulist, in the house of Iadmon at Samos. She was brought to Egypt by Xanthus of Samos, who plied at her expense a trade that was vile enough, having purchased her so that she might follow the profession of courtesan for her master's profit. She succeeded marvelously, and her renown drew to her a throng of lovers, among whom Charaxus of Mitylene, brother of the celebrated Sappho, was so taken with this charming girl that he gave a considerable sum for her ransom. Rhodopis, becoming free, did not leave Egypt, where her beauty and her talents had procured her enormous riches. She made a singular use of these riches, employing the tenth part of her property in the making of iron brooches, which she offered, by reason of some unknown vow, to the temple of Delphi, where they were still to be seen in the time of Herodotus. This grave historian speaks of these symbolic brooches as of a thing which no one had yet conceived, and he does not seek to divine the figurative sense of this singular offering. In the time of Plutarch, nothing more than the place was pointed out. Popular tradition had so confounded the brooches in the temple of the Delphic Apollo and the pyramid of Mycerinus, constructed a number of centuries before the brooches were made, that everyone in Egypt obstinately insisted upon attributing that pyramid to Rhodopis. According to some, she had paid the cost; according to others (Strabo and Diodorus Siculus seem to have adopted this erroneous opinion), her lovers had built it at their mutual expense for her pleasure: from which one must conclude, the courtesan had a fondness for pyramids.

Rhodopis, whom the Greeks call Dorica (and Dorica was celebrated throughout all Greece), headed the list of her admirers with the name of Aesop, who, all deformed and ugly as he was, had only to give one of his fables in order to win the favor of this beautiful daughter of Thrace. The poet's kiss marked her for fortune's smile. The handsome Charaxus, to whom she owed her liberty and the beginning of her



opulence, had permitted her to settle in the city of Naucratis, where he came to see her on each voyage which he made to Egypt to bring and sell wine. Rhodopis loved him well enough to be faithful to him so long as he sojourned at Naucratis, and love detained him there more than commerce. During one of his absences, Rhodopis, seated on a terrace, was gazing out over the Nile and searching the horizon for the sail of the ship which was to bring Charaxus back; one of her slippers had dropped from her impatient foot and lay glittering on the rug; an eagle saw it, seized it with his beak and carried it away into the air. At this moment, King Amasis was at Naucratis, holding his court there, surrounded by his principal officers. The eagle which had carried off Rhodopis' slipper without her perceiving it, let it drop on the knees of Pharaoh. The latter had never seen a slipper so small and so comely. He at once started a search for the pretty foot to which it belonged, and when he had found it, after having tried the divine slipper on the feet of all the women of his States, nothing would do but he must have Rhodopis for a mistress. Nevertheless, Amasis' mistress would not renounce Charaxus; and Greece celebrated, in the songs of its poets, the loves of Dorica, whom Sappho, Charaxus' sister, had pursued with bitter reproaches. Pausidippus, in his book on Ethiopia, devotes this epigram to Charaxus' sweetheart: "A bow of ribbons bound your long tresses, voluptuous scents exhaled from your flowing robes; vermilion-colored as the wine which smiles in the chalices, you enlase in your charming arms the handsome Charaxus. The verses of Sappho bear witness to you and assure you of immortality. Naucratis shall preserve the memory of you so long as boats sail with joy on the waves of the majestic Nile."

Naucratis was a city of courtezans; and those who came out of this city appeared to have profited from the lessons of Rhodopis. Their charms and their seductions were for a long time the talk of Greece, which often sent her debauchees to Naucratis, and these brought back marvelous tales of Prostitution. Following Rhodopis, another courtesan named Archidice also acquired much celebrity by the same means; but according to Herodotus, she enjoyed less vogue than her predecessor. It is known, however, that she placed so high a price on her favors that the richest was ruined in paying that price; and there were many who were so ruined. A certain young Egyptian, who was hopelessly in love with this courtesan, wanted to ruin himself for her; but as his fortune was mediocre, Archidice refused the sum and the lover.

The latter did not regard himself as beaten; he invoked Venus, who gave him, gratuitously, in a dream, what he would have paid for so dearly in reality; he was satisfied and asked no more. The courtesan learned what had happened without her and cited before the magistrates her bankrupt debtor, claiming the price of the dream. The magistrates decided this point of law with great wisdom: they authorized Archidice to dream that she had been paid. (See the notes of Larcher, translator of Herodotus.)

The great era of courtesans in Egypt appears to have been that of the Ptolemies in the third century before Christ; but among the illustrious *filles*, some were Greeks, while others came from Asia, and almost all had begun by playing the flute. Ptolemy Philadelphus had a great number in his service; one, Cleine, served him as a cup bearer and he caused statues to be erected to her, representing her clad in a light tunic and holding a chalice; another, Mneside, was one of his musicians; still another, Pothyne, enchanted him by the graces of her conversation; while another, Myrtium, whom he had taken out of a place of debauchery frequented by boatmen of the Nile, intoxicated him with unclean pleasures. This Ptolemy paid generously for the services which were rendered him, and he honored with a tomb the memory of Stratonice, who had left him with fond recollections, although she was Greek and not Egyptian. This voluptuous monarch had no distaste for the Greeks: he had brought from Argos the beautiful Bilistice, who came of the race of the Atrides, and who forgot her origin in as joyous a fashion as she could. Ptolemy Euergetes, the son of Philadelphus, was not lavish in his loves as his father had been; he was content with Irene, whom he brought to Ephesus, of which he was governor; and she was so devoted that she even died with him. Ptolemy Philopator put himself at the mercy of a cunning courtesan named Agathoclea, who reigned under his name in Egypt, even as she reigned in his bedroom. Another Ptolemy could not get on without a certain hetaira, whom he had nicknamed Hippea, or the Mare, for the reason that she shared her affections between him and the provider of fodder for his stables. He loved, above all, to drink with her; and one day, when they were drinking full-tilt, he smiled and shouted at her, striking her on the rump as he did so: "The Mare has eaten too much hay!"

### CHAPTER III

THE Hebrews were originally of Chaldea and had brought with them from that country a pastoral mode of life. It is certain, therefore, that Guest-Prostitution existed in remote ages among the Jewish race as it had among the Chaldean herdsmen and hunters. One finds traces of it here and there in the Holy Books. But Sacred Prostitution was fundamentally antipathetic to the religion of Moses, and that great legislator, who had taken upon himself the task of imposing a bridle on his perverse and corrupt people, was forced to repress, in the name of God, the frightful excesses of legal Prostitution. Hence, that terrible penalty which he had traced in letters of blood on the tables of law, and which, yet, was scarcely sufficient to halt the monstrous excesses of the sons of Abraham.

Perhaps, the most ancient example which exists of Guest-Prostitution is to be found in Genesis. From the times of Noah, the sons of God, or the Angels, had descended on earth to make the acquaintance of the daughters of men, and they had by these latter children who were giants. These angels would come of an evening to demand shelter in the tent of a patriarch, and they would leave more or less satisfied with what they had found, leaving behind them living memories of their passage. The Book of Genesis does not tell us by what authentic sign one may distinguish an angel from a man; it was only at the end of nine months that this was revealed by the birth of a giant. These giants did not inherit the virtues of their fathers, for the wickedness of men continued to increase, to such an extent that the Lord, indignant at seeing the human species so degenerated and so corrupt, resolved to annihilate it, with the exception of Noah and his family. The deluge renewed the face of the earth, but the passions and the vices which God had wanted to wipe out reappeared and multiplied with men. Hospitality itself was no longer a holy and respected thing, in the unclean cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; when the two angels who had announced to Abraham that his wife, Sarah, a hundred and twenty years old, was about to give him a son, went to Sodom and stopped in the house of Lot to pass the night, the inhabitants of the city, from the youngest to the oldest, surrounded the house and called upon Lot: "Where are the men," they said to him, "who have come to you this

night? Cause them to come out so that we may know them." . . . "I pray you, my brothers," replied Lot, "do them no evil. I have two daughters who have not yet known a man; I will bring them forth and you may treat them as you please, providing you do no evil to these men, for they have come under the shadow of my roof." Lot, who was even ready to sacrifice the honor of his daughters for the sake of hospitality, would, may we not assume, have accorded with good grace to his two guests that which he offered a delirious populace? As to his two daughters, whom the spectacle of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah had not sufficiently frightened to inspire in them sentiments of continence, they strangely abused, one after another, the drunkenness of their unfortunate father.

We have here debauchery, and of the most hideous sort, but it is not yet legal Prostitution, finding a market for goods which the law does not condemn and which custom authorizes. This variety of Prostitution is to be discovered among the Hebrews from the time of the Patriarchs, eighteen centuries before Christ, when the chaste Joseph, slave and superintendent of the eunuch, Potiphar, in Egypt, resisted the immodest provocations of his master's wife and abandoned to her his cloak rather than his honor. One of Joseph's brothers, Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, had married in succession to a daughter named Tamar two sons whom he had had with a certain woman of Canaan; these two sons, Er and Onan, dying without children, their widow promised to wed their last brother, Shelah, but Judah was not anxious for this marriage, seeing a bad omen for it in the fact that the two preceding ones had remained sterile.

Tamar, out of patience with her father-in-law, who had promised to marry her to Shelah, conceived a singular means of proving that she was able to become a mother. Knowing that Judah had gone to the heights of Timnath to have his flock sheared, she laid aside her widow's weeds, wrapped herself in a veil and then took a seat at a crossroads on the way which Judah had to take. "When Judah saw her," we are told in Genesis (Chapter 38), "he thought her to be an harlot, for she had covered her face in order not to be recognized, and advancing toward her, he said: 'Let me go with you!' For he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said to him: 'What will you give me to enjoy my embraces?' He said: 'I will give you a kid of my flocks.' Then she said: 'I will do what you wish, if you give me a pledge of what you promise.' And Judah said to her: 'What



would you have me give you for a pledge?' She said, 'Your signet, your bracelets and the staff that is in your hand.' He came in to her and she at once conceived; then she arose and went away and, laying aside the veil which she had taken, she put on once more her widow's garments. Judah, thereupon, sent a kid by one of his herdsmen who was to bring him back his pledge; but the herdsman did not find the woman in whose hands the pledge had been left, and he asked the passers-by: 'Where is the harlot who was by the wayside?' And they said, 'There has been no harlot in this place.' And he returned to Judah and said: 'I cannot find her, and the men of the place said that there had been no harlot there.' A little while after, they came to announce to Judah that his daughter-in-law was with child, and he ordered that she be burned as an adultress; but Tamar then made known to him who was the father of the child she bore, by giving him his signet, his bracelets and his staff."\*

Here, certainly, we have the oldest case of legal Prostitution which history is able to furnish, for this incident, reported by Moses with all its characteristic circumstances, goes back to the twenty-first century before Christ. We see already the Jewish prostitute, hidden in the folds of her veil, seated by the side of the road and giving herself to an infamous commerce with the first passer-by who was willing to pay. This, from the earliest antiquity, was the rôle which Prostitution played among the Hebrews. The Holy Books are filled with passages which show us the crossroads serving as a market and a fair for the wantons, who sometimes remained immobile, wrapped in their veil as in a shroud, and sometimes were clad in immodest habits and richly adorned, burning perfumes and singing voluptuous songs to the accompaniment of the lyre, the harp and the tambour, or dancing to the sound of the double-flute. The wantons were not Jewesses, at least for the most part, for the Scriptures describe them ordinarily as *foreign women*; they were Syrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, etc., who excelled in the art of exciting the senses. The law of Moses expressly forbade Jewish women to lend themselves to that Prostitution which was authorized for men, or which, at least, was not condemned in the case of the men. This explains, then, how it came these *foreign women* did not have the right to prostitute themselves within the cities, and why it was the great highways had the privileges of giving

\*Translator's Note:—Lacroix gives his own free version of the Scriptural passage. He ordinarily translates from the Vulgate, with the same freedom.



asylum to public debauchery. There was no exception to this custom except during the reign of Solomon, who permitted courtezans to establish themselves in the cities. But before his time, and after, they were not to be met with in the streets or at the crossroads of Jerusalem; they were to be seen putting themselves up at auction along the roads. There, they set up their tents of wild beast skins or of brilliantly colored stuffs. Fifteen centuries after Tamar's escapade, the prophet Ezekiel, speaking in symbolic language to Jerusalem, the great prostitute, said: "You have built a brothel and you have created a place of Prostitution at all the crossways; at the head of each road you have set up the sign of your lechery, and you have made an abominable employment of your beauty, and you have abandoned yourself to all the passers-by (*divisisti pedes tuos omni transeunti*, says the Vulgate) and you have multiplied your fornications."

The sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt, where manners were very depraved, ended in perverting their own and in leading them away from a state of simple nature; they were living in a shameful promiscuity when Moses brought them out of servitude and gave them a code of religious and political laws. Moses, in leading the Jews to the Promised Land, had recourse, of necessity, to a terrible penalty, in order to put a stop to the excess of moral corruption which was corrupting the people of God. From the heights of Mount Sinai, he listened to those words which the Lord uttered in the midst of lightning and thunder bolts: "Thou shalt not commit fornication! Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife!" Finally, he himself did not disdain to regulate, in the name of Jehovah, the forms of a species of Prostitution which was an essential concomitant of slavery. "If any one has sold his daughter as a slave," he says, "she shall not be permitted to quit the service of her master in the manner of other servants. If she is displeasing in the eyes of the master to whom she has been delivered, let the master send her back; but he shall not have the power to sell her to a strange people, if he wishes to be rid of her. If he has affianced her to his son, he shall conduct himself toward her as toward his own daughters. If he has taken for her another, he shall look to the dowry and the garments of his slave, and he shall not deny to her the price of her shame (*pretium pudicitiae non negabit*). If he does none of these three things, she shall leave his service without paying anything." This passage, which commentators have understood in different fashions, proves in the most obvious manner that

among the Jews, at least before the definitive rendition of the tables of the law, the father had the right to sell his daughter to a master who might make of her his concubine, for a period of time to be determined by the bill of sale. One sees, also, in this singular piece of legislation that the daughter, sold for her father's profit, drew no personal advantage from the abandonment which she was forced to make of her body, except in case the master, after having affianced her to his son, wished to replace her by another concubine. It is thus clearly established that the Hebrews trafficked among themselves in the Prostitution of their daughters.

Moses, that wise legislator, who spoke to the Hebrews through the mouth of God, had to deal with incorrigible sinners; he left them, out of prudence, as a feeble recompense for what he took from them, the liberty of having relations with foreign prostitutes; but he was inflexible with regard to the crimes of bestiality and sodomy. "Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death," he says in *Exodus* (Chapter XXII). "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with a woman," he says in *Leviticus* (Chapter XX), "for it is an abomination; thou shalt not cohabit with any beast, and thou shalt not lie down with it. The woman shall not prostitute herself to a beast and shall not lie down with it, for it is a crime!" Moses, in speaking of these crimes against nature, could not refrain from finding an excuse for the Jews, who had not invented them, and who, in giving themselves over to such abominations, were merely following the example of other peoples. "The nations which I shall cast out before you are polluted with these turpitudes," cries the leader of Israel, "the land in which they dwell has been soiled, and I shall punish it for its iniquity, and the earth shall vomit forth its inhabitants." Moses, who knew how stubborn his people were in their villainous habits, combined threats and prayers, with the object of imposing a salutary restraint on the sensual excesses: "Whosoever shall commit a single one of these abominations shall be cast forth from the midst of my people!" Even this was not enough to frighten the guilty ones; Moses comes back, again and again, to the penalty which is to be inflicted on them: "The two who have committed of the abomination shall both be put to death, stoned or burned, the man and the beast, the beast and the woman, the male and his male companion." Moses had not foreseen that the female sex might lend itself to similar enormities. And always, he places under the eyes of the Israelites the necessity of not

being like the peoples whom they were to drive from the land of Canaan: "Ye shall not follow the errors of those nations," says the Eternal, "for they have committed those infamies which I forbid you, and I abhorred them." (*Leviticus*, XX).

The evident object of the law of Moses was to prevent, so far as possible, the Jewish race from degenerating and from perishing as a result of excesses which already had only too far vitiated its blood and weakened its fibre. These excesses, moreover, were a grave menace to the increase of the population and to the public health. Such were, certainly, the two principal motives which determined the legislator not to tolerate legal Prostitution, except with foreign women. He forbade it absolutely with Jewish women. "Thou shalt not prostitute thy daughter," he says in *Leviticus* (Chapter XIX), "in order that the land may not fall to whoredom nor become full of wickedness." He says again, even more expressly, in *Deuteronomy* (XXIII): "There shall be no whore among the daughters of Israel, nor any whoremonger\* among the sons of Israel." (*non erit meretrix de filiabus Israel nec scortator de filiis Israel*). These two articles of the Mosaic code regulated prostitution among the Jews, while the Jews were settled in Palestine and lived under the government of judges and of kings. The places of debauchery were managed by foreigners, for the most part Syrians; the women of pleasure, spoken of as consecrated, were all foreign, for the most part Syrian women. As for the reasons which had decided Moses to exclude Jewish women from legal Prostitution, they are sufficiently set forth in the chapters of *Leviticus*, where he is not afraid to reveal the disgusting infirmities to which the women of his race were subject. Thence come all the precaution which he takes to render unions healthy and prolific. In no other manner may one explain that twentieth chapter of *Leviticus*, in which he enumerates all the persons of the feminine sex whose nudity a Jew shall not uncover (*turpitudinem non discooperies*), under pain of disobeying the Eternal: "Let no one go into his mother to lie with her!" says the Lord. Accordingly, no Jew could, without committing a crime, have knowledge of his mother or mother-in-law, his sister or sister-in-law, his daughter, granddaughter, or daughter-in-law, his maternal or paternal aunt, his niece or his cousin-german. Moses believed it was useful to establish the degrees of consanguinity which represented an

\**Translator's Note*.—The King James Version has: "nor a Sodomite of the sons of Israel."

incompatible alliance, one as contrary to the physical welfare of a society as to its moral organization. It was from an analogous motive that the approaching of a woman during her menstrual indisposition had been so severely interdicted, the law of Moses punishing this offense with death under certain circumstances. The danger, it was true, was more serious among the Jews than anywhere else.

These Jewish women, however beautiful they were, with their almond eyes, their voluptuous mouths, coral lips and pearly teeth, with their supple and rounded forms, with their full and opulent throats, and with their ample figures, these Jewish women of whom the Shulamite of the Song of Songs provides us with so seductive a portrait, were afflicted, if one is to believe Moses, with secret infirmities which certain medical archæologists have seen fit to regard as symptoms of venereal disease. One thing is certain, that disease did not come either from Naples or America. It would be imprudent, therefore, and a trifle too daring to utter a pronouncement on a subject so delicate; but in any case, one cannot but approve Moses, who had taken singular precautions for safeguarding the health of the Hebrews and for preventing their progeny from being corrupted in the seed. According to other commentators, a little doubtful as physicians but very clever theologians, we have to deal here merely with a flux of blood and hemorrhoids, in that terrible fifteenth chapter of *Leviticus*, which begins like this in the most restrained of translations: "When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean, and this shall be his uncleanness in his flux; whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be stopped from his issue, his uncleanness." The text of the *Vulgate* leaves no doubt as to the nature, if not the origin, of this flux: *Vir cui patitur fluxum seminis immundus erit; et tunc indicabitur huic vitio subiacere, cum per singula momenta adhæserit carni ejus atque concreverit fædus humor*. And that is the reason why Moses ordained ablutions so rigorous and tests so severe for those who *had an issue*, according to the expression to be found in orthodox translations of the *Bible*. The sick man, who rendered impure everything which he touched, and whose garments had to be washed in the degree to which he had soiled them, was to take himself to the door of the tabernacle on the eighth day of his flux and sacrifice two turtle-doves or two pigeons, the one for his own sin, the other as a burnt offering. These two pigeons, birds which paganism had consecrated to Venus, on account of their many and ardent caresses, represented



evidently the two perpetrators of a sin which had had such distressing consequences. This expiatory sacrifice did not cure the sick man, who remained shut out of Israel and far from the tabernacle of God until his flux had been stopped. Moses imposed true police regulations to halt, so far as possible, the spread of an unclean malady, which affected the sources of generation among the Hebrews, which relentlessly propagated itself and which ended by infecting all the tribes of Israel.

This malady, moreover, was so aggravated during the sojourn of the Israelites in the desert that Moses expelled from the camp all those who had become tainted with it (*Numbers*, Chapter VI). It was by order of the Lord that the children of Israel pursued without pity every leper and *every man who had an issue*. It may be imagined that these unfortunate ones, to whom, undoubtedly, the Eternal did not extend the benefit of his celestial manna, perished of cold and hunger, if not of their malady. It is permissible, also, to see a connection between this strange and odious disease and the law of Jealousy, which Moses formulated in order to appease husbands who accused their wives of having compromised their health by committing an adultery which had left baleful traces behind it. Endless and inextinguishable quarrels on this subject arose in Jewish households. The husband suspected his wife and sought proof for his suspicions in the state of their mutual health; the woman would swear in vain that she had not been defiled, and she often imputed to her husband the wrongs with which he reproached her. Then, husband and wife would appear before the sacrificial priest; the husband would offer on behalf of his wife a cake of barley flour, made without oil and known as the *jealousy offering*; the two would stand in the presence of the Eternal, and the priest would place the cake in the woman's hands, holding in his own hands the bitter water which brought with it the malediction: "If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse; but if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband, the Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot and thy belly to swell." The woman would respond *Amen*, and would drink the bitter waters, while the priest whirled the jealousy cake around and offered it upon the altar. If, later, the woman saw her belly



puffing out and her thigh wasting away, she was convicted of adultery and became infamous in the eyes of Israel. Her husband, on the contrary, with whom everyone sympathized as a victim *guiltless from iniquity*, was justified if not cured. For, while he had not drunk the bitter waters in the presence of the priest, he often suffered the greater part of the disgusting infirmities and terrible accidents which the execration inflicted upon his criminal wife. When the latter had manifested her innocence, by the normal state of her belly, and the plump condition of her thigh, she no longer had to fear the reproaches of her husband, and she might go on and have children.

Moses, it may be seen, was not solely occupied with making the Israelites moral: he wished to destroy the germs of their venereal maladies, and so, placed his laws of public hygiene under the sanction of God's tabernacle. But the Israelites, coming into contact with foreign peoples, the Moabites, Ammonites and Canaanites and all the Syrian races, more or less corrupt and idolatrous, adopted the tastes, customs and vices of their guests or their allies. The most flagrant Prostitution flourished among the incestuous descendants of Lot and his daughters. Sacred Prostitution, especially, had become shamefully widespread in the cult of those false gods whom the inhabitants of the country worshiped with a deplorable frenzy. Moloch and Baal-peor were the monstrous idols of that rite of Prostitution into which the Jewish people were bent upon being initiated. Moses was quite justified in being severe against the fornicators; but the example of the latter was, none the less, followed by many, who gave themselves over to the appetites of the flesh. And so, a throng of obscene superstitions took root among the Hebrews, even though the altars of Baal and of Moloch had been cast down and no longer received unclean offerings. Moses, in the twentieth chapter of *Leviticus* and in the twenty-third chapter of *Deuteronomy*, had placed the stigma of infamy on this execrable cult and on the apostates who practised it to the shame of the true God of Israel: "Whosoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, give in his seed to Moloch shall surely be put to death; the people shall stone him." Thus spake the Eternal to Moses, commanding the latter to expel from among his people those who fornicated with Moloch. In *Deuteronomy*, it is Moses alone who condemns, without always attaching a determined penalty, certain impurities which concern Baal rather than Moloch: "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore,

or the *price of a dog* into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow; for both these things are an abomination unto the Lord thy God."

Scholars have given themselves much trouble in endeavoring to discover what were these Moabite gods, Moloch and Baal-peor; they have extracted from the *Talmud* and from the Jewish commentators the weirdest details concerning the images of these gods and the worship which was paid to them. Thus, Moloch was represented under the figure of a man with the head of a calf, which, with arms extended, waited while sacrifices were made to him of flour, turtle-doves, lambs, rams, calves, bulls and children. These different offerings were placed in the seven mouths which opened in the middle of the belly of this avid brazen divinity, erected upon an immense oven, which was lighted in order to consume at once the seven kinds of offerings. During this holocaust, the priests of Moloch kept up a terrible music, with sistrums and tambours, in order to stifle the cries of the victims. Then took place that infamy cursed by the God of Israel: the Molochites abandoned themselves to practices worthy of the land of Onan, and, inspired by the rhythmic sound of the musical instruments, writhed about the incandescent statue, which appeared red through the smoke; and they gave forth frenzied cries as, in accordance with the Biblical expression, they gave their seed to Moloch. This abomination became so naturalized in Israel that some unfortunate and senseless ones even dared to introduce it into the cult of the God of the Jews, and thus to soil His sanctuary. Moses, in his wrath, took revenge for this, and the law-giver repeated the words of the Eternal: "I will turn my face away from those who commit fornication with Moloch, and I will drive them from the midst of my people." This Moloch, or Molech, was none other than the Mylitta of the Babylonians, the Astarte of the Sidonians, the Venus Genetrix, woman made divine. Hence the offerings which were brought him: flour, to indicate the substance of life; turtle-doves, to express the tenderness of love; lambs, to designate fecundity; rams, to symbolize the irritability of the senses; calves, to indicate the nourishing wealth of nature; bulls, as a symbol of the creative force; and children, to demonstrate the object of this cult paid to the goddess. We can understand how, through a shameful exaggeration of religious zeal, the faithful worshipers of Moloch, having no children to offer him, would have offered an obscene compensation for this cruel sacrifice. For the

rest, it would seem that the cult of this unclean Moloch enjoyed less vogue than did that of Baal-peor among the Jews.

Baal-peor or Belpeor, who was a favorite god of the Midianites, was accepted by the Hebrews with a passion which bears witness to the indecency of his mysteries. This disreputable deity offsets, often, the God of Abraham and of Jacob; his detestable cult, accompanied by the most frightful debauches, was never completely eradicated in the Jewish nation, which practiced it secretly, in the woods and in the mountains. This cult was, certainly, that of Adonis or of Priapus. Monuments representing the god are altogether lacking. Certain Jewish writers barely permit themselves to speak, with the voice of tradition, on the subject of Baal, his statues and his ceremonies. We shall limit ourselves to an attempt to glimpse, behind a decent veil, the scandalous images which Selden, the Abbé Mignot, and Dulaure have endeavored to reconstruct with the aid of erudition. According to Selden, who relies on the authority of Origen and of St. Jerome, Belpeor was represented sometimes by a gigantic phallus, called in the Bible: *Species turpitudinis*, and sometimes by an idol with its robe drawn above its head, as though to reveal its turpitude (*ut turpitudinem membri virilis ostenderet*). According to Mignot, the statue of Baal was a monstrous Hermaphrodite; according to Dulaure, it was not remarkable, save for the attributes of Priapus. But all scholars who base their conclusions upon the Holy Scriptures and upon the commentaries of the Fathers of the Church are agreed on the subject of Sacred Prostitution, which was a chief element of this odious cult. The priests of God were handsome young men, without beards, who, with bodies which had been shorn of hair and rubbed with perfumed oils, carried on an ignoble and obscene trade in the sanctuary of Baal. The *Vulgate* calls them *effeminate ones* (*effæminati*); the Hebraic text describes them as *kedescim*, that is to say, *consecrated ones*. Sometimes, these consecrated ones were but mercenaries attached to the service of the temple. Their ordinary rôle in these infamous mysteries was a more or less active one; they sold themselves to the worshipers of their god, and deposited upon the latter's altars the wages of their Prostitution. This was not all; they had dogs trained to the same infamous uses, and the impure proceeds derived by them from the sale or rental of these animals was also applied to the revenues of the temple. Finally, in certain ceremonies, which were celebrated at night, in the depths of sacred groves, when the stars seemed to veil their faces and

flee in fright, priests and consecrated ones would attack each other with knives, covering themselves with scars and slight wounds, and then, heated by wine and excited by musical instruments, would fall, helter-skelter, into a pool of blood.

This was why Moses wished to have no groves near the temples; this was why, blushing, himself, at the turpitudes which he denounced to the malediction of heaven, he forbade the offering in the house of God of the wages of Prostitution and the *price of a dog*. The effeminate ones formed a sect which had its rites and its initiations. This sect multiplied, under cover, whatever efforts the legislator may have made to wipe it out. It survived the ruin of idols, and was propagated even in the temple of the Lord. The origin of these effeminate ones goes back, evidently, to the prevalence of various obscene maladies which had vitiated the blood of women, and which rendered it very dangerous to approach them, before Moses had purified his people by expelling and giving over to execration anyone who was attainted with these endemic maladies: the leprosy, the itch, the flux of blood, and fluxes of any kind. When the public health had been somewhat restored, the Jews who gave themselves to the cult of Baal were no longer content with their effeminate; and these latter, seeing themselves less sought after, in order to prevent the diminution of the revenues of their cult, conceived the idea of consecrating to Baal an association of women who should prostitute themselves for the benefit of the altar. These women, named like the others *kedeschoth*, in Biblical language, did not reside with them in the portico or in the confines of the temple; they lived under striped tents at the approaches to the temple, and prepared themselves for Prostitution by burning perfumes, by selling philtres, and by playing music. These foreign women continued their trade for their own profit after the temple of Baal was no longer there to receive their offerings; and it was they who, trained from infancy to this shameful priesthood, came to serve exclusively the needs of Jewish Prostitution.

The history of Sacred Prostitution among the Hebrews begins, then, with the time of Moses, who was not successful in abolishing it, and it reappears here and there in the Holy Books down to the time of the Maccabees.

When Israel was encamped in Shittim, in the land of the Moabites, almost in view of the Promised Land, the people committed much fornication with the daughters of Moab (*Numbers*, Chapter XXV),



who invited them to their sacrifices; and it was thus they were initiated into the rites of Belpeor. The Eternal called Moses and ordered him to have those taken who had sacrificed to Belpeor. A terrible malady, born of the debauchery of the Israelites, was already decimating them, and twenty-four thousand were dead of the malady. Moses assembled the judges of Israel to order them to expel from among the people the guilty ones whom the influenza had attained. "And, behold, one of the children of Israel, named Zimri, came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of the congregation of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, saw this scandal, he rose up, took a javelin in his hand and went after Zimri into the tent, and thrust both of them through with a single stroke, the man and the woman in the act of generation." This startling justice put an end to the epidemic which was devastating Israel and appeased the Lord's resentment. But the moral evil had deeper roots than the physical one, and the abominations of Baal-peor reappeared often among the people of God. They were never more flauntingly in evidence than under the kings of Judea. During the reign of Rehoboam, 980 years before Christ, "the effeminate ones were established in the land and were committing all the abominations of those peoples whom the Lord had blotted out before the sons of Israel." Asa, one of the successors of Rehoboam, caused the effeminate ones to disappear, and purged his realm of the idols which defiled it; he even drove out his own mother, Maacha, who presided over the mysteries of Priapus (*in sacris Priapi*) and overturned from top to bottom the temple which she had erected to this god, whose immodest statue (*simulacrum turpissimum*) he broke to pieces. Jehoshaphat, who reigned following him, annihilated those of the effeminates who had succeeded in escaping the severities of his father, Asa. Nevertheless, the effeminate ones were not slow in coming back; the temples of Baal were rebuilt, and that god's statues were once again an insult to public decency; for two centuries later, King Josiah was still waging an implacable war on the false gods and their cult, which was mingled at Jerusalem with the worship of the Lord. The temples were demolished, the statues hurled to earth, the obscenity-sheltering woods cut down and burned; Josiah did not spare the tents of the effeminates, which these infamous ones had reared even in the interior of Solomon's temple, and which, woven by the hands of women con-



secrated to Baal, provided an asylum for their strange prostitutions.

An ancient Jewish commentator on the books of Moses adds a number of details pertaining to manners, details which had been furnished him by tradition, to the fifteenth chapter of *Numbers*, in which are mentioned the carryings-on of the Israelites with the daughters of Moab. These daughters had erected tents and opened shops (*officinæ*), all the way from Bet-Aiscimot to Ar-Ascaleg; there they sold all sorts of trinkets, and the Hebrews ate and drank in the field of Prostitution. When one of them would go out to take the air and to walk up and down the stretch of tents, a girl would call to him from the interior of the tent in which she was lying: "Will you come and buy something from me?" And he would buy; on the morrow, he would buy again; and on the third day, she would say to him. "Enter and choose me; you are the master here." Then he would enter the tent, and there he would find a chalice filled with Ammonite wine waiting for him: "May it please you to drink this wine!" she would say to him. And he would drink and this wine would inflame his senses, and he would say to the beautiful daughter of Moab: "Kiss me!" She, drawing from her bosom the image of Peor (without doubt a phallus), would say: "My Lord, if you wish me to give you a kiss, worship my god." . . . "What!" he would cry, "am I to accept idolatry?" . . . "What difference does it make!" the enchantress would reply, "it is enough to uncover yourself before this image." The Israelite would not refuse such a bargain as this; he would uncover himself, and the Moabite would end by initiating him into the cult of Baal-peor. To recognize Baal and to worship him, one had, then, but to uncover himself before the god. And so, the Jews, from fear of appearing with bare head in his presence, kept their hats on even in the temple and before the tabernacle of the Lord. The daughters of Moab, it may be, were in no small part to blame for the cancer which was gnawing away at Israel, as a result of the idolatries which they had provoked; for, after the triumphant expedition which Moses had made against the Midianites, all the men having passed the gauntlet of swords, he ordered that a part of the women who remained prisoners should also be killed. "It is they," he said to the captains of his army, "it is they who, at the suggestion of Balaam, have seduced the sons of Israel and caused you to sin against the Lord by showing you the image of Peor. It is necessary, therefore, to slay without pity all the women who have lost their virginity" (*mulieres quae noverunt viros in coitu*).

Moses, in a score of places in his books, appears much preoccupied with the virginity of young girls; the Jewish woman was obliged to bring a dowry to her husband, and one may believe that the Hebrews, however little advanced they may have been in the natural sciences, had certain sure means of ascertaining virginity when it existed, and proving afterward that it had existed. And so, (*Deuteronomy*, Chapter XXII), when a husband after he had taken a wife, accused her of not having entered the conjugal bed as a virgin, the father and the mother of the accused would present themselves before the old men, who sat at the gate of the city, and would produce for their eyes the marks of their daughter's virginity, by showing the chemise which she had soiled on her wedding night. In such a case, silence was imposed on the husband, and he had no more objections to make against a case of virginity so well established; but, in the contrary case, when the poor woman was not able to produce such evidence, she ran the risk of being convicted of unfaithfulness in her duties, and of then being condemned as one who had committed fornication in the house of her father; and they would lead her to this house and crush her with stones. Moses, like all legislators, had pronounced pain of death against all adulteresses; as for rape, only that of an affianced girl was punished with death, and the victim remained with the man who had outraged her, at least when the crime had been committed in the open; otherwise, it was deemed that the betrothal of the unfortunate one had not been cried or had not been cried enough. If the girl had not yet received a ring from her fiancé, her insulter became her husband for having humiliated her (*quia humiliavit illam*), with only the penalty of paying the father of the victim fifty shekels of silver, which was called the *purchase of a virgin*. Moses, more indulgent toward men than toward women, prescribed for the latter a chastity so rigorous that the married woman who saw her husband at grips with another man could not come to his aid under pain of losing her hand; for they cut off the hand of the woman who, by mischance or otherwise, touched the shameful parts of a man; in their combats, the Jews had the habit of resorting all too often to this redoubtable mode of attack, the tendency of which was none other than to mutilate the Jewish race. It was to prevent these dangerous combats that Moses closed the door of the temple to eunuchs, in whatever fashion they might have become such (*attritis bel amputatis testiculis et abscisso vereto*. *Deuteronomy*, Chapter XXIII). But all these rigors of the law only applied to Jewish women; foreign

women, whatever they did in Israel or with Israel, were in no wise molested, and Moses himself knew well enough the value of these women seeing that, when more than a hundred years of age, he took one for a wife or, rather, for a concubine. She was an Ethiopian who did not worship the god of the Jews, but who was none the less pleasing on this account to Moses. Mary, the sister of the Lord's favorite, had to repent for having spoken ill of the Ethiopian, for Moses was annoyed and the Lord was irritated; and so, Mary became a leper white as snow, as a punishment for her malign remarks against Moses' black mistress. The latter, who did not always preach by example, would have been ill-advised in demanding of the Israelites a continence which it seemed difficult for him to preserve. He recommended to them only a certain moderation in the pleasures of the senses and chastity in their exterior actions. And so, in accordance with his law, love became a sort of mystery, which was not to be accomplished except under certain conditions of time, place and decency. There were, moreover, many precautions to take in the interest of the public health; the Jewish women were subject to many hereditary indispositions, which the abuse of sexual relations could only aggravate and multiply; families, by intermarrying, had impoverished and vitiated their blood-streams. Intemperance was the dominant vice of the Israelites, and their legislator, who had been powerless to render them absolutely chaste and virtuous, only prescribed that they should observe a certain moderation in their pleasures and in their desires: "Let the sons of Israel," says the Lord to Moses, "wear fringes of blue upon the borders of their garments so that the sight of these bands may recall to them the commandments of the Lord and turn away their eyes and their thoughts from whoring." (*Numbers*, XV).

Foreign women or women of pleasure were not so under ban in Israel that their sons might not take rank and authority among the people of God; the brave Jephthah was born at Gilead, of a prostitute, and he was, none the less, one of the leaders of the army who was most esteemed by the Israelites. One commentator of the Holy Book has taught that Jephthah, in order to expiate the prostitution of his mother, consecrated to the Lord the virginity of his only daughter. One can scarcely believe, as a matter of fact, that Jephthah really immolated his daughter, and one must see in this human holocaust merely a symbol that was intelligible enough: Jephthah's daughter wept for her virginity with her companions for two months, before taking a widow's

weeds and vowing herself to the Lord's service. Another commentator, more preoccupied with ancient archæology, has seen in the retreat of this daughter upon the mountain an initiation into the cult of Baal-peor, who had his temples, his statues and his sacred grooves in the *high places*, as the Bible often says. Jephthah, then, would have consecrated his daughter to Prostitution, that is to say, to the trade which his mother had practiced. So far as that goes, the books of *Joshua* and *Judges* show no implacable aversion to prostitutes. When Joshua sent two spies to Jericho, his spies arrived in the night at the house of a prostitute named Rahab, "And they lay with her," the Bible tells us. This woman dwelt on the walls, as did the women of her kind who had not the right to live in the cities. There came from the king of Jericho certain ones to take these spies, but she had hidden them under the roof of her house, and she finally assisted them in fleeing the city by means of a rope. These spies promised to save her life and that of all those who were under her roof. Joshua did not fail to keep the promise which his scouts had made to this lecheress, who was spared in the massacre which followed, along with her father, her mother, her brothers and all those who were related to her. "She has dwelt in the midst of Israel up to this day," says the author of the book of *Joshua*, who does not appear to be at all scandalized by the residence of a foreign woman in the midst of the Israelites. She was not the only one, it is true, and the sacred historian often has occasion to speak of these creatures.

We shall not pause at the birth of Samson, in which might be found certain traces of Sacred Prostitution; we shall not remark that his mother was sterile, and that a man of God, whose face was like that of an angel, *came in* to this sterile woman to announce to her that she was to have a son; we merely shall point out that Samson, the Lord's chosen, went into the village of Gaza and there saw a lecheress and entered her house. The Lord, nevertheless, did not forsake him; for in the middle of the night Samson arose as well disposed as if he had been sleeping peacefully all the while, and tore down the gates of Gaza, which he bore to the summit of the mountain. Finally, he fell in love with a woman who was called Delilah, and who lived in a tent near the river Kedrom. She was a courtesan, and her treason which the Philistines purchased with silver, proves that she was not oversatisfied with her lover's generosity. The Lord did not reproach Samson with the use which he had made of his strength, but did abandon him when



the razor had despoiled the head of this Nazarene. Delilah abandoned him also, and no longer slept on his knees.

The Jews might have concubines in their houses without any offense to the God of Abraham, for Abraham likewise had his own. Gideon also had one who bore him a son, in addition to the seventy sons which his wife had given him. As to the Levite of Ephriam, the latter had taken in the land of Bethlehem a concubine who had committed lechery in his house, says the Protestant translation of the Bible, and who had left him to return to her father's house. It was there that the Levite went, to his own misfortune, to seek her; on his return, he accepted the hospitality which was offered him by an old man of the city of Gibeah and entered the latter's house to pass the night, with his two asses, his concubine, and his servant. The travelers washed their feet, ate and drank; but as they went to sleep, the inhabitants of Gibeah, who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, surrounded the house and, beating on the door, cried to the host: "Bring forth the man who has entered your house so that we may abuse him (*ut abutamur eo*)."

The old man came forth to meet these sons of Belial: "Brothers, do not commit this villainous action; for this man is my guest and I must protect him. I have a virgin daughter and this man has a concubine; I will give you these two women and you may assuage your brutality with them; but I beg you, do not stain yourselves with a crime against nature by abusing this man." The furious ones would hear nothing; finally, the Levite of Ephriam placed his concubine out of doors and abandoned her to the Benjamites, who abused her all night. The following morning, they sent her back, and the unfortunate woman, exhausted by this horrible debauchery, was barely able to drag herself through the door where her lover slept; there she fell dead, her hands thrown out across the threshold. It was in this sad state that the Levite found her and raised her up. Although he had, in a manner, sacrificed her himself, he was all the more ardent to avenge her. Israel took up his and the concubine's cause, and armed against the Benjamites, who were almost exterminated as a result of it all. What remained of the guilty tribe would have left no posterity, if the other tribes, which had sworn not to give their daughters to the sons of Belial, had not been inspired to make prisoners of the daughters of Jabesh in Gilead and to take the daughters of Shiloh in Canaan for the purpose of repopling this land, which the frightful warfare had transformed



into a solitude. The Benjamites then took for wives these foreign and idolatrous women.

These foreign women, no doubt, were not slow in re-establishing the cult of Moloch and of Baal-peor in Israel, as was done a little later by King Solomon's concubines. Under this king, who reigned a thousand years before Christ, and who elevated the Jewish nation to the highest degree of prosperity, the license of manners was pushed to the extreme limit. King David, in his old age, was content to take a young virgin who would care for him and would keep him warm at night in her couch. The Lord, despite this innocent velleicity of an old man frozen with age, did not forsake him and often visited him still. But Solomon, after a glorious and magnificent reign, allowed himself to be carried away by the fury of his carnal passions; he loved, in addition to the daughter of a Pharaoh of Egypt, whom he had espoused, a number of foreign women, Moabites, Ammonites, Idumeans, Sidonians and others whom the God of Israel had ordered him to flee as he would dangerous sirens. But Solomon gave himself with frenzy to these excesses. (*Hic itaque copulatus est ardentissimo amore*). He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, who turned his heart away from the true God. He then fell to worshiping Astarte, goddess of the Sidonians; Chemosh, god of the Moabites, and Moloch, god of the Ammonites; he erected temples and statues to these false gods on a mountain situated opposite Jerusalem. He burned incense to them and offered them obscene sacrifices. At these sacrifices, offered to Venus, to Adonis and to Priapus, under the names of Moloch, Chemosh and Astarte, the priestesses were Solomon's wives and concubines. There were, indeed, during the reign of this wise and voluptuous king, so great a number of foreign women who lived by Prostitution in the midst of Israel that a pair of prostitutes are even to be found figuring as heroines in the celebrated judgment of Solomon. The Bible has these two women of an evil way of life (*meretrices*) appearing before the throne of the King, who decides between them and settles their differences without manifesting the slightest contempt.

At this period, Prostitution had, then, a legal existence, authorized and protected, among the Jewish people. The foreign women, who had, so to speak, a monopoly of it, had crept even into the interior of cities and there carried on their shameful industry publicly, brazenly, without fearing any corporal or pecuniary punishment. Two chapters

of the Book of Proverbs of Solomon, the fifth and the seventh, are almost a picture of Prostitution as it existed at the time. One may deduce from certain passages in Chapter V that these foreign women were not exempt from terrible maladies, the result of debauchery, which they often communicated to the libertines who were consumed by them (*quando consumpseris carnes tuas*): "The lips of a strange woman drop as an honey comb," says Solomon, "Her mouth is smoother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. . . . Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, lest thou give thine honor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel, lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labors be in the house of a stranger." In Chapter VII, we have another scene of Prostitution which differs little in its details from those that take place in our own day under the vigilant eye of the police; it is a scene which Solomon certainly had viewed from a window of his palace, and which he has painted after nature, with the brush of a poet and a philosopher: "For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and behold among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house; now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, 'I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. Therefore, came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman (*vir*) is not at home, he is gone a long journey; he hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.' With her much fair speech, she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straight-way, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Harken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let

not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her." Solomon, in the midst of his orgies with his concubines, celebrating the mysteries of Moloch and of Baal, the great King Solomon, probably had forgotten his own Proverbs. Solomon, nevertheless, repented and died in the peace of the Lord.

The plague of Prostitution remained always attached, like leprosy, to the Jewish nation; not only legal Prostitution, which was tolerated by the law of Moses in the interest of purity in domestic manners, but also Sacred Prostitution, which accounted for the presence in the midst of Israel of so many foreign women, reared in the religion of Moloch, of Chemosh and of Baal-peor. The prophets, whom God raised up unceasingly to govern and correct his people, found that people occupied in sacrificing to the Gods of Moab and of Ammon, on the summits of the mountains and in the shadows of the sacred groves; the air was filled with licentious chants and with the incense which the prostitutes burned in front of them. There were tents of debauchery at the crossways of all the roads and even at the gates of the Lord's temples. The scandalous spectacle of Prostitution must constantly have afflicted the eyes of the prophet, since his prophecies reflected at every instant immodest images. Isaiah says to the city of Tyre, which had prostituted itself with all the nations of the earth: "Take a cithara, harlot doomed to oblivion, dance about the city, sing, make your instrument resound, that they may be mindful of you!" One sees from this passage that the *strange women* made music by way of advertising their wares. Jeremiah says to Jerusalem, which, like a wild mare, gave out on all sides the emanations of physical love: "Harlot, you have wandered on all the hills, you have prostituted yourself under all the trees!" Jeremiah pictures for us, under the most hideous colors, those obscene children of Israel who defiled themselves with lust in the house of a lecheress, and who became the courtiers of Prostitution. (*Moecheati sunt et in domo meretricis luxuriabantur; equi amatores et emissarii facti sunt.*) The Jews, when they were led into captivity at Babylon, found no cause for astonishment at what they saw of the obscene excesses of the cult of Mylitta, whom they already knew under the name of Moloch. Jeremiah pictures it all for us, with a holy indignation: the priests who traffic in Prostitution, the gods who preside over it, the gold of the sacrifice, which pays for the labors of the courtesan, and the courtesan herself rendering to

the altars the hundredth part of what she has received. (*Dant autem et ex ipso prostitutis, et meretrices ornant, et iterum, cum receperint illud a meretricibus, ornant deos suos.*)

Israel might now, in the matter of Prostitution, teach all the peoples who had instructed it and whom it had surpassed. The prophet Ezekiel gives us a terrifying account of Jewish corruption. These frightful prophecies are filled with little else than bad places open to every comer, tents of lechery planted on all the roads, and houses of scandal; one sees only courtezans clad in silk and embroidered robes, gleaming with jewels, reeking with perfumes; one beholds only infamous scenes of fornication. The great prostitute, Jerusalem, who gives herself to the children of Egypt for the sake of their promising figures, makes presents to the lovers with whom she is satisfied, in place of demanding of them a wage: "I shall give you over into the hands of those to whom you have abandoned yourself," the Lord says to her, "and they shall destroy your brothel, and they shall demolish your dwelling; they shall despoil your vestments, and they shall bear away your basins of gold and silver, and they shall leave you naked and full of ignominy." It must be that Jerusalem had carried its abominations to a climax to be so menaced by the prophet with the fate of Sodom. That Prostitution which caused the sons of God to suffer most must have been the one which persisted in finding shelter under the eaves of Solomon's temple. This temple, from the time of the Maccabees, a century and a half before Christ, was still the scene of business for those prostitutes who came there to seek customers. (*Templum luxuria et comessionibus gentium erat plenum et scortantium cum meretricibus*). It may be believed that this state of things had not changed down to the time when Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple, and although the evangelists do not explain the nature of that commerce of which Jesus purged the Lord's house, the Book of Maccabees, written a hundred years before, indicates what it might have been. Moreover, there is talk of turtle-dove merchants in the gospel of St. Mark, and it may be presumed that these birds, dear to Venus and to Moloch, were for no other purpose than that of providing offerings to lovers. The law of Jealousy, so poetically conceived by Moses, did not prescribe for husbands this sacrifice of the turtledove, but only that of a cake of barley flour.

Jesus, who was impitiable toward these parasitic guests of the sanctuary, and who shattered the counter of their iniquity, shows himself,



still, full of indulgence with regard to women, as if he pitied their weaknesses. When the Samaritan woman found him seated by a well, this strange woman, who had had five husbands and who had lived in concubinage with a man, met with no reproach from the lips of Jesus, who entered gently into conversation with her, as he drank the water which she had drawn from the well. The disciples of Jesus were astonished at seeing him in the company of such a woman and remarked disdainfully: "Why talkest thou with her?" The disciples were more intolerant than their divine Master, for they would willingly have stoned, in accordance with the law of Moses, another adulterous woman, whom Jesus saved, saying: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Finally, the Son of Man did not fear to absolve publicly a prostitute who was ashamed of her guilty trade. When he was sitting at table in the house of a Pharisee, at Capernaum, a woman of an evil way of life (*peccatrix*), who dwelt in that city, brought a vase of alabaster containing a perfumed oil; she bathed with her tears the feet of the Savior, anointing them with oil and drying them with her hair. When the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." Jesus, turning towards this woman, said to her with angelic kindness: "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee because thou hast loved much." These words of Jesus have been commentated and tortured in many ways; but one thing is sure, the Son of God who uttered them had no intention of encouraging the sinner to continue her way of life. He chased away seven demons who possessed this woman, named Mary Magdalen; and it is possible, these were but seven libertines with whom she had relations. The Magdalen became, from then on, a holy woman, a repentant sinner; she attached herself to the divine Redeemer who had delivered her; she followed him in tears all the way to Calvary; she sat, weeping all the while, before his sepulchre. It was to her that Christ appeared first of all, to afford her striking evidence of his forgiveness. This sinner was placed among the saints, and if, during all the Middle Ages, she did not feel greatly honored at being the patroness of sinning women, who had not imitated her conversion, she at least consoled them by her example and, even in the depths of those cursed retreats, she showed them still the road to Heaven. (*Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum.*)



## CHAPTER IV

SACRED Prostitution existed in Greece from the time that gods and temples were to be found there; it goes back, thus, to the origins of Greek paganism. That theogony which the poetic imagination of the Hellenic race had created, more than eighteen centuries before the modern era, was but an allegoric poem, based, in a manner, upon the love-sports of the universe. All religions had had the same cradle; everywhere was the female nature, unfolding and generating at fecund contact with the male nature; everywhere were man and woman, rendered divine in the most significant attributes of their sexes. Greece received from Asia the cult of Venus, along with that of Adonis, and since there were not enough of these amorous divinities to go around, Greece multiplied them under a host of different names, so that there were as many Venuses as there were temples and statues. Priests and poets, with common accord, took upon themselves the task of inventing and writing the annals of their gods, and in this they developed but a single theme, that of sensual pleasure. In this ingenious and charming mythology, Love reappeared at every moment, with varied character, and the history of each god or goddess was but a voluptuous hymn in honor of the sexes. It is easy to understand how Prostitution, which shows itself under so many forms in the *Odyssey*, in the metamorphoses of gods and goddesses, must have been a reflection of Greek manners at the time of Ogyges and of Inachus. Could a nation whose religious beliefs were but a mass of obscene legends ever have been chaste and restrained?

Greece accepted, from heroic times, the cult of the woman and the man turned into divinities, similar to the rites which Babylon and Tyre had established at Cyprus; this cult came from the island which had been especially consecrated to it, spreading from island to island in the Archipelago, until it soon reached Corinth, Athens and all the cities of Ionia. Then, to the degree in which Venus and Adonis had been naturalized in the fatherland of Orpheus and of Hesiod, they lost something of their Chaldean and Phœnician origin; they fashioned themselves, so to speak, after a civilization more polished and more refined, but not less corrupt. Venus and Adonis are more veiled than they had been in Asia Minor, but under this veil, there are delicacies

and refinements of debauchery which were probably unknown in the sacred enclosures of Mylitta and in the mysterious groves of Belpeor. Information is lacking to enable us to reconstruct, in all their intimate details, the cult of the Greek Venuses, especially in the ages prior to the fine centuries of Greece; the poets merely offer us here and there, individual features which, if they hint at everything, are precise about nothing. The philosophers avoid social pictures and leap at random into vague moral generalities; the historians present us only with isolated facts, which often do not explain one another; finally, the figurative monuments, with the exception of a few medallions and a few inscriptions, have all perished. We possess merely notions, sufficiently numerous, with regard to the principal Venuses; for the name and attributes of Venus have a special relation to the subject with which we are dealing. The mere enumeration of these Venuses will relieve us of the necessity of having recourse to conjectures, more or less based upon appearances. Sacred Prostitution, ceasing to be practiced for the profit of the temple and the priest, had left, in rites and religious usages, a profound trace of its former prevalence.

The Venus who personifies, so to speak, this Prostitution, was called Pandemos. Socrates says, in the *Banquet* of Xenophon, that there are two Venuses, the one celestial, the other human or Pandemos; that the cult of the first is chaste and that of the second criminal. Socrates lived in the fifth century before Christ, a skeptical philosopher who submitted religions themselves to his own inflexible reason. Plato, in his *Symposium*, also speaks of the two Venuses, but he is less severe with regard to Pandemos. "There are two Venuses," he says, "the one very ancient, without mother and the daughter of Uranus, from whom she gets the name of Uranios; the other younger, the daughter of Jupiter and Diana, whom we call Venus Pandemos."\* This is the Venus of the people (*pan*, all; *demos*, the people); she was the first divinity whom Theseus caused to be adored by the people he had gathered within the walls of Athens; hers was the first goddess' statue to be erected in the public square of that rising city. This ancient statue, which already no longer existed when Pausanius wrote his *Voyage* in Greece, and which had been replaced by another, the work of a clever sculptor and one more modest than the first, made a

\**Translator's Note*:—The author mixes, without regard to hybrids, the Greek and Latin names of Venus: *Venus Uranios*, *Venus Pandemos*, etc. (for *Aphrodite Uranios*, etc.) His nomenclature has been followed here.

permanent appeal to Prostitution. Scholars are not in agreement as to the pose which the artist gave it, but it may be presumed that this pose represented a special characteristic of the goddess. Theseus, to whom the character of this statue was clearer, had placed next to the statue of Pandemos that of Pytho, goddess of persuasion. The two goddesses expressed so well what it was desired they should express that at every hour of the day or night someone might be seen coming to make an act of public obeisance before them. And so, when Solon had collected, from the income of the dieterions which he had founded at Athens, the necessary sum for erecting a temple to the goddess of Prostitution, he caused this temple to be built opposite the statue, which drew about its pedestal a constant procession of faithful proselytes. The courtezans of Athens were very much given to the festivals of Pandemos, which were repeated the fourth day of every month, and which gave rise to strange excesses of religious fervor. On those days, the courtezans only practiced their trade for the profit of the goddess, and they dispensed, in offerings of silver, what they had earned under the auspices of Pandemos.

This temple, dedicated by the wise Solon to the Venus of the people, was not the only one which bore witness to the cult of Prostitution in Greece. There were others in Thebes, in Bœotia and at Megalopolis in Arcady. The one at Thebes dated from the time of Cadmus, the founder of that city. Tradition tells us that the statue to be seen in this temple had been made from the brazen heads of the ships which had brought Cadmus to the Theban land. It was the offering of Harmony, daughter of Cadmus; the princess, indulgent toward the pleasures of love, had been pleased to consecrate this symbol to the goddess, devoting to the latter these bulwarks or metal beaks which had grounded in the sand to give birth to a city. In the temple at Megalopolis, in addition to the statue of Pandemos there were two others, which presented the goddess under three different aspects, more decent and less nude. These statues of Pandemos were all sufficiently bold in appearance, for they didn't date from a time when custom imposed veils even on goddesses; the one at Elis, where Pandemos also had a celebrated temple, had been remade by the famous sculptor, Scopas, who entirely altered the posture, and who was content with a very obvious symbol, placing his Venus on the back of a goat with golden horns.

Venus was adored at a score of places in Greece under the name of

Hetaira or of Porne; the former indicated sufficiently the nature of the deeds of grace which were done in her name. Her ordinary worshipers were the courtezans and their lovers; each class offered her sacrifices in order to be taken under her protection. This Venus, however disreputable she may have been in her cult, still recalled a supposedly historic fact, which was to the honor of courtezans, but one which, unfortunately, goes back to the fabulous days of Greece. In accordance with a tradition of which the city of Abydos was proud, that city, reduced once to slavery, had been delivered by a courtezan. One festival day, the foreign soldiers, who were masters of the city, and who had been posted to guard its gates, fell into a drunken orgy with courtezans and were put to sleep to the music of flutes. One of these courtezans seized the keys of the city and, returning over the walls, went to warn her fellow citizens, who armed themselves, slew the sleeping sentinels and drove the enemy from their city. In memory of their recovered liberty, they erected a temple to Venus Hetaira. This Venus also had a temple at Ephesus, but we do not know whether its origin was so honorable as that of the temple of Abydos. Each of these temples, moreover, evoked a particular tradition. That on the promontory of Simas, on the Euxine Sea, had been constructed at the expense of a beautiful courtezan who dwelt in that place, and who waited on the banks of the sea for Venus, who had been born of the waves, to send her passers-by. It was in memory of this priestess of Venus Hetaira that the prostitutes were called *Simaethes*, in the neighborhood of that promontory, which lured sailors from afar to the worship of the goddess, and which opened its consecrated grottoes to this cult. The temple of Venus Courtezan at Samos, a Venus who was known as the goddess of reeds and of swamps, had been built with the fees of Prostitution by the hetairae who had followed Pericles to the siege of Samos, and who had trafficked there in their charms for enormous sums. (*Ingentem ex prostituta forma quaestum fecerant*, says Athenaeus, whose Greek is even more energetic than his Latin translation.) But although Venus possessed the name of *Hetaira*, the festivals which were celebrated in Magnesia under the name of *Hetairides* had nothing to do with her; they had been instituted in honor of Jupiter Hetairos and of the expedition of the Argonauts.

It was not enough to give to Venus the name of courtezans whom she inspired and who commended themselves to her; they gave her also other names, which were not less suited to these favorite priest-



esses. That of *Peribasia*, for example, in Latin *Divaricatrix*, had allusion to the movements which provoked and determined pleasure. This Venus was nominally worshiped by the residents of Argos, as St. Clement of Alexandria tells us, and the latter does not hesitate to inform us that the weird name of the Moving One had come to her *divaricandis cruribus*. The Peribasia of the Greeks became, with the Romans, *Salacia*, or Venus Lubrica, who takes still other analogous and more characteristic names. The famous architect of the labyrinth of Crete, Daedalus, out of his love of mechanics, had dedicated to this goddess a statue of quicksilver. The gifts offered to the goddess made allusion to the qualities which she was supposed to possess. These offerings, which were sometimes very costly, recalled, in general, the condition of the women who had deposited them upon the altar or who had suspended them from the pedestal of the statue. They were most often phalli of gold, of silver, of ivory or of mother-of-pearl; there were also precious jewels and, especially, mirrors of polished silver, with chasing and inscriptions. These mirrors were always looked upon as attributes of the goddess and of courtezans. Venus was represented with a mirror in her hand; she was also represented holding a vase or a bottle of perfume: for, says the Greek poet, "Venus does not imitate Pallas, who bathes sometimes but who perfumes herself never." The courtezans, who were so interested in rendering Venus propitious, despoiled themselves for her sake of all the objects of the toilet which they loved best. Their first offering must be their girdle; they possessed also combs, pincers for depilatory purposes, pins and other little gewgaws, in gold and in silver, which respectable women did not permit themselves, and which Venus Courtezan might accept without scruple from these humble imitators. And so, the poet, Philetaerus, cries with enthusiasm: "It is not without reason that one sees, throughout all Greece, temples erected to Venus Courtezan, and not to the Venus of marriage."

Venus had in Greece many other titles which had to do with certain particularities of her cult, and the temples which were reared to her under these often obscene appellations were more frequented and richer than those of Venus Pudica or of Venus the Armed. Sometimes she was worshiped under the name of *Melanis* or the *Dark One*, as the goddess of the amorous night; this was the one who appeared to Lais to inform the latter that her lovers were coming from all directions with magnificent presents; she had temples at Melancae in Arcady,



at Cranium near Corinth, and at Thespieæ in Bœotia, and these temples were surrounded with groves, impenetrable by day, in which one went groping his way in search of adventures. Sometimes she was called *Mucheia*, or the goddess of lairs; *Castnia*, or the goddess of indecent copulations; *Scotia*, or the *Shadowy One*; *Derceto*, or the *Gadder*; *Callipyge*, or *She of the Beautiful Buttocks*, etc. Venus, the veritable Proteus of love, or, rather, of pleasure, had, for each of her transformations, a special mythology, always ingenious and allegoric. She represented, consistently, the woman fulfilling the duties of her sex. And so, when she was *Derceto*, or the goddess of Syria, she had fallen from Olympus into the sea, and there she had met a great fish whom she had besought to lead her to the coast of Syria, where she rewarded her savior by placing him among the stars: to translate this fable into human language, one need but imagine a beautiful Syrian maiden, lost in a shipwreck and saved by a fisherman, who had been smitten with her. The name of *Derceto* expressed her comings and goings on the coast of Syria with the fisherman who had received her into his bark. The priests of *Derceto* had given a more mystic form to the allegory. According to them, in the ages contemporary with chaos, a gigantic egg had been detached from heaven and had rolled into the Euphrates; the fishes pushed this egg to the bank, doves swarmed upon it, and Venus came forth: and that is why doves and fishes are sacred to Venus; but it is not known to which species of fish the goddess accorded her preference. Finally, there was a Venus Mechanitis, or Mechanical Venus, whose statues were of wood, with feet, hands and a mask of marble; these statues were moved by hidden means, and assumed the most capricious poses.

This goddess was, without doubt, under her diverse aspects, the goddess of beauty; but the beauty which she apotheosized was less that of the face than that of the body; and the Greeks, more in love with statuary than with painting, made more ado about form than about color. Beauty of face, as a matter of fact, belonged almost indiscriminately to all the goddesses of the Greek Pantheon, while beauty of body was one of the divine attributes of Venus. When the Trojan shepherd, Paris, awarded the apple to the most beautiful of the three rival goddesses, he did not decide his choice between them until he had seen them without veils. Venus did not represent, therefore, intelligent beauty, the soul of the woman; she represented only material beauty, the body of the woman. Poets and artists attributed

to her a very small head with a high and narrow forehead, but, by way of compensation, a body and members very long, plump and supple. Perfection of beauty, with the goddess, began, above all, with the loins. The Greeks regarded themselves as the first connoisseurs in the world of this kind of beauty. And yet, it was not Greece but Sicily which founded a temple to Venus Callipyge. This temple owed its origin to a judgment which was not quite so famous as that of Paris, for the parties were not goddesses, and the judge did not have to decide between three. Two sisters, in the vicinity of Syracuse, while bathing one day, fell into a dispute over a beauty prize; a young man of Syracuse who happened to be passing, and who had caught a glimpse of the contestants without being seen himself, bent his knee to the earth, as though before Venus and cried out that the elder had won the victory. The two contestants fled, half naked. The young man came back to Syracuse and, still greatly moved with admiration, recounted what he had seen. His brother, marveling at the tale, declared that he would be content with the younger. It ended by their collecting all they possessed that was most precious and going to the father of the two sisters with the request that they might become his sons-in-law. The younger, desolate and indignant at having been vanquished, fell ill; she requested a retrial of the case, and the two brothers, by common agreement, proclaimed they had both equal rights to victory, accordingly as the judge regarded one of them from the right side and the other from the left. The two sisters married the two brothers and brought with them to Syracuse a reputation for beauty which grew with time. The statue, which was to be admired in the temple there, shared at once the secret charms of each sister, and the union of these two models in a single copy was looked upon as constituting that perfect type of beauty which was an attribute of Venus Callipyge. It is a poet, Cercidas of Megalopolis, who has immortalized this copy, without having seen the originals. Athenaeus reports the same anecdote, which is one, evidently, that conceals under transparent veils the story of two Syracusan courtezans.

If the courtezans reared temples to Venus, they were also authorized, at least in the early times of Greece, to offer sacrifices to the goddess and to take an active part in her public festivals, in addition to certain festivals, such as the Aphrodisia and the Aloennes, which they reserved more particularly for themselves, and which they celebrated behind closed doors. They fulfilled, sometimes, the functions

of priestesses in the temples of Venus, and they were attached to these temples to assist in making a living for the priests and in augmenting revenues of the altars. Strabo states positively that the temple of Venus at Corinth possessed more than a thousand courtezans, who had been consecrated to the goddess through the devotion of her worshippers. It was a general usage in Greece thus to consecrate to Venus a certain number of young girls, when one wished to render the goddess favorable, or when one had seen his vows fulfilled by her. Xenophon of Corinth, in speaking of the Olympic games, promises Venus he will consecrate to her fifty hetairai if she will give him the victory; he is the victor, and he fulfills his promise. "O sovereign of Cyprus," cries Pindar, in the Ode composed in honor of this offering, "Xenophon has come to bring to your vast grove a troop of fifty beautiful girls!" Then, he addresses the latter: "O young girls, who receive all strangers and give them hospitality, priestesses of the goddess Pytho in the rich Corinth, it is you who, by burning incense before the image of Venus and invoking the mother of Loves, win for us, often, her celestial aid and procure for us those sweet moments which we taste upon the voluptuous couches where the tender fruit of beauty is plucked!" This consecration of courtezans to Venus was especially in vogue at Corinth. When the citizens had a request to make of the goddess, they never failed to confide it to the *consecrated ones*, who were the first to enter the temple and the last to leave. According to Cornelian of Heraclea, Corinth, on certain important occasions, caused herself to be represented before Venus by an innumerable procession of courtezans in the costumes of their trade.

The employment of these consecrated ones in the temples and the groves of the goddess is sufficiently attested by a number of figurative monuments, which are less discreet in this respect than are the contemporary writers. The paintings of the two chalices and the two Greek vases, cited by the learned M. Lajard, after the description of the MM. Witte and Lenormand, leave us with no doubt regarding this Sacred Prostitution, perpetuated in the cult of Venus. One of these vases, which forms a part of the celebrated Durand collection, represents a temple of Venus, in which a courtesan is receiving, through a slave, the propositions of a stranger, crowned with myrtle, who stands outside the temple and holds a purse in his hand. On the second vase, a stranger, similarly crowned with myrtle, is seated on a couch and appears to be trafficking with a courtesan, who stands up-

right before him in a temple. M. Lejard attributes the same significance to an engraved stone, cut with a number of faces, five of which bear animals, emblems of the cult of the Oriental Venus, while the sixth represents a courtesan looking into a mirror while she gives herself to a stranger. But that which went on in the temples and in the sacred groves has left no more characteristic traces than these among the authors of antiquity, who did not dare betray the mysteries of Venus.

If the courtesans were welcome in the court of their goddess, they were not permitted, on the other hand, to mingle except from afar in that of other goddesses, and so they celebrated in the interior of their houses, after the vintage, the Haloa\* or the festivals of Ceres and of Bacchus. There were certain licentious suppers which made up the ritual of these festivals, at which the courtesans gathered with their lovers to eat, drink, laugh, sing and disport themselves. "At the next festival of Haloa," writes Megara to Bacchis, in the letters of Aleyphron, "we shall gather at Colyttus in the house of Thessala's lover, there to eat together; be sure to come." ". . . We had come to the feast of Haloa," writes Thaïs to Thessala, "and we had all gathered at my house to celebrate the eve of the festival." These suppers, called the *little mysteries of Ceres*, were but pretext for debauchery, which lasted a number of days and a number of nights. It appears that, in certain temples of Ceres, in the one at Eleusis, for example, the courtesans, the sight of whom respectable women ordinarily fled, had succeeded in having a hall opened for themselves, which they alone had the right to enter without priests, and where one of them presided at the religious ceremonies, which her companions, like so many vestals, honored with their more than ordinarily chaste presence. During these ceremonies, the old courtesans gave lessons to the young ones in the science and practice of the mysteries of the Good Goddess. The pontiff, Archias, who was permitted to offer a sacrifice to the Ceres of Eleusis, in the hall of courtesans, without the intervention of their high priestess, was accused of impiety by Demosthenes and condemned by the people.

\*Translator's Note:—For the Haloa, see the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (edition of 1911) article on *Demeter*; "In addition to being a harvest festival, marked by the ordinary popular rejoicings, the Haloa had a religious character. The *aparchai* (first fruits) were conveyed to Eleusis, where sacrifice was offered by a priestess, men being prohibited from undertaking the duty. A *telete* (initiatory ceremony) of women by a woman also took place at Eleusis, characterized by obscene jests and the use of phallic emblems," etc. Haloa is obviously from *halos*, threshing-floor.



All the gods, however, and all the goddesses as well, accepted the offerings which the courtezans brought them, without the latter daring to enter in person those temples the thresholds of which were barred to them. The famous courtesan, Cottina, who made herself so famous that she gave her name to the dicterion which she had occupied near Colonaë, opposite a temple of Bacchus, dedicated to the gods, in honor of one of her gallant Spartan lads, a small brass bull, which was placed on the front of the temple of Minerva. This votive bull was still in place in the time of Athenaeus. But there was a god who naturally showed himself less severe toward the women of pleasure; this was Adonis, deified by Venus, who had loved him. The festivals of Adonis were, moreover, so bound up with those of the goddess that one could not well adore one without rendering homage to the other. Adonis had had also, in ancient times, a large part in the offerings of Sacred Prostitution, before his cult had been confused with that of Priapus. Courtezans of all conditions profited thus from the festivals of Adonis, and they, in the practice of their trade, under the protection of the god and for his profit, in the groves which surrounded his temples, drew many strangers from all parts. "In the place I am taking you to," says a courtier to a cook, whom he is about to place in a situation, "there is a brothel (*porneon*): a renowned hetaira there celebrates the festivals of Adonis with a numerous troop of companions." The Athenians, despite the just reprobation which their moralists attached to the life of courtezans, nevertheless discovered these courtezans on their Olympus as in their temples; for altars and statues were erected to Venus Leona and to Venus Lamia, by way of apotheosizing the two mistresses of Demetrius Poliorcetes.

## CHAPTER V

SACRED Prostitution, which existed in all the temples of Athens at the time Solon was giving laws to the Athenians, must have been an invitation to legislators to establish legal Prostitution. As to Guest Prostitution, which was contemporary with the heroic ages of Greece, it has disappeared without leaving any traces in the manners of the people; and marriage was too well protected by legislation, the legitimacy of children seemed too necessary to the honor of the republic, for the memory of the metamorphoses and human incarnations of the gods to have much force against conjugal faith and respect for the family. Solon saw the altars of the priests becoming rich with the proceeds of that Prostitution which was carried on by the consecrated ones, who only sold themselves to strangers, and he naturally dreamed of procuring the same benefits for the State, and, by this means, of serving at once the pleasures of the Athenian youth and securing the safety of respectable women. And so, he founded as an establishment of public utility a great dicterion,\* in which slaves, purchased with the funds of the state and supported by its revenues, laid a daily tribute on the vices of the population and labored shamelessly to augment the revenues of the republic. There has been an attempt, in the absence of historic proof, an attempt, it is true, that is not supported by tradition, to relieve the wise Solon of the moral responsibility of having legally instituted libertinism at Athens; it has been pretended that this great legislator, whose code breathes of modesty and chastity, would not have given himself the lie by opening the gate to debauchery on the part of his fellow citizens; but in a matter of this nature, which seems beneath the dignity of history, we must have recourse to that tradition which was accepted by Athens, and which has been preserved as well in the works handed down from Solon's time; and in tradition, we catch an echoed rumor of that dicterion which Solon is said to have founded, and which was thus glorified by its supposed origin.

Nicander of Colophon, in his *History of Athens*, today lost, had stated positively that Solon, indulgent towards the ardors of excitable

\**Translator's Note*.—House of prostitution. The word has been treated as an English one in the present text.

youth, not only had bought slaves and placed them in public houses but also had built a temple to Venus Courtesan with the silver which the disrespectable inmates of those houses had amassed. "O Solon!" cries the poet Philemon, in his comedy, *The Delphians*, which has not come down to us, "O, Solon! you became by that the benefactor of the nation, seeing in such an establishment only welfare and tranquillity for the people. It was, moreover, absolutely necessary in a city in which ebullient youth could not restrain itself from obeying the most imperious laws of nature. You prevented thus very great evils and inevitable disorders by placing in certain houses, destined for this purpose, the women whom you had bought for the public needs, and who were kept by the state that they might accord their favors to whoever would consent to pay for them." To this invocation, drawn at first-hand from the comic poet, Athenaeus adds, after Nicander, that the tax fixed by Solon was a very small one, and that the Dictyriades\* appeared to be fulfilling public functions: "The trade which they carried on was marked by no rivalries or vengeance. One met at their hands with no delay, disdain or refusal." It was, undoubtedly, to Solon himself that the interior regulation of such an establishment was due; for the dictyria was for a long time administered like the other public utilities, and it undoubtedly had at its head, at least in the beginning, a grave magistrate.

One may suppose, with much appearance of reason, that the public women were at that time entirely separated from the civic population and from civic life; they never left their legal abode; they never showed themselves at the festivals and religious ceremonies; if a mild tolerance permitted them to descend into the street, they were forced to wear a special costume, which made them recognizable, and they were severely forbidden to enter certain places, where their presence would have caused scandal or distraction. Foreigners, moreover, they would have had no rights in the city; and those who, Athenians by birth, had vowed themselves to Prostitution, lost all privileges belonging to their birth. We do not possess the laws which Solon had enacted in order to render Prostitution legal; but it is permissible to formulate thus the principal regulations, which are sufficiently attested by many facts to be discovered here and there in the Greek writers. But the code of Solon, with regard to women of the great dictyria, supported at the expense of the republic, lost something of

\*Translator's Note:—Inmates of the dictyria.

its severity when, less than a century after the legislator's death, the courtezans had made an irruption from all sides into Greek society and even dared to mingle with decent women in the Agora. Hippias and Hipparchus, sons of the tyrant Pisistratus, who governed Athens five hundred and thirty years before the modern era, established public festivals which gathered the people at the same table, and in these festivals the courtezans were authorized to take their place beside the matrons; for the tyrant's sons were less concerned with ameliorating the condition of the people than with subjecting and corrupting the populace. And so, to make use of Plutarch's expression, the women came there in waves, and, as Idomeneus, a Greek historian, whose works are known to us only by fragments, states, Pisistratus, at whose instigation these orgies took place, ordered that the fields, the vineyards and the gardens be opened to every one on the days which were devoted to public debauchery, in order that each might take part, without the necessity of going, with mysterious secrecy, to Solon's dictation.

The Athenian legislator had had two obvious urgent motives for regulating as he had done, Prostitution: he proposed, in the first place, to shield from violence and insult the modesty of virgins and married women; finally, he had for object the turning of youth from lewd desires, disgraceful and brutalizing in their effects. Athens became the scene of all sorts of disorders; vice against nature was frightfully widespread, and threatened to arrest social progress. These debauchees, who were no longer men, could they be citizens? Solon wished to give them the means of satisfying the needs of their senses without surrendering to the disorders of their imagination. And so, he limited his efforts to correction to one class among his compatriots; the others, without renouncing their culpable habits, had resort to a libertinism that was more natural, though not less deadly in its effects. Solon's object was always fulfilled when the security of married women against libertines was assured. Legal Prostitution was, so to speak, in its infancy, and did not have a numerous clientele; it was barely known; the public became accustomed to it only by degrees; one did not go in for it with excess until after he had had, in a manner of speaking, some experience; and so it was, the laws of Solon came to be overthrown by the necessities of public debauchery, and to be successively effaced with the corruption of manners, which did not become more pure as they became more civilized. But, at least at Athens, the



domestic fireside remained sacred and incorruptible; the poison of Prostitution had not penetrated there; and even while Venus Pandemos was calling upon her worshipers to forget all decency, even while the Piræus, the district reserved for courtezans at the gate of Athens, grew larger, conjugal modesty was guarding the threshold of the citizen's home, while the citizen went to offer a sacrifice to Pandemos and to sup with his friends at his mistress' house.

The private manners of the women of Sparta, and above all of the women of Corinth, were not as regular as those of the Athenian women; and, moreover, in those two cities, Prostitution had not been subjected to special laws; it was there still free, to make use of a modern expression, and it might with impunity propagate itself under all possible forms and conditions. At Corinth, a city of commerce and of travel, pleasure was a great affair for the inhabitants, and for those strangers who poured in there from all countries of the world; and so it had been judged best to leave entirely to the individual's will and fancy the manner in which he should enjoy himself. At Sparta, city of austere and republican virtues, Prostitution could be but an accident, an almost indifferent exception. Lycurgus, certainly, had not thought of it. Continence and chastity among women seemed to him superfluous, if not ridiculous. The only thing he proposed to himself was to govern men, and to render them braver, more robust, more warlike; as to the women, he had taken no account of them. Lycurgus, as Aristotle formally states in his *Politics* (Book II, Chapter 7), had been bent upon imposing temperance on men and not on women; the latter, long before his time, had lived disorderly lives, and had given themselves, almost publicly, to all the excesses of debauchery (*in summa luxuria*, says the Latin version of Aristotle). Lycurgus altered nothing of this state of affairs; the daughters of Sparta, who received a masculine education little enough suited to their sex, took part half naked in the masculine games, running, wrestling, fighting with the latter. If they married, they did not at once immerse themselves in wifely duties; they were not clad any more decently; they kept themselves at no greater distance from the company of men; but the men did not appear to perceive a difference of sex which the women were bent upon obviating.\* A husband who had been surprised coming out of his wife's bedroom would have blushed at being so little of a Spartan. It is not hard to understand how, among such men, courtezans would

\**Translator's Note*:—Cf. Caesar's description of the manners of the ancient Germans.

have been perfectly useless. The Spartans did not permit themselves those distractions of the heart and senses to which the young Athenians were all too inclined. The friendship of the Spartans among themselves was but a fraternity in arms, as pure, as holy, as that of the Athenians had been depraved and dishonorable. The women of Sparta did not all accommodate themselves to this absolute abnegation of their sex and nature; there were many, girls or women, who readily engaged in extremely licentious acts, and this without bringing down upon themselves the least retribution. Courtezans would have found no employment in a city in which married women and marriageable girls were present to compete with them. And so, it is with justice that Plato, in the first book of his *Laws*, attributes to Lycurgus the incontinence of the women of Sparta, since this legislator had not deigned to look for any remedy, or even to inflict a penalty.

Prostitution was, it may be seen, tolerated if not organized and regulated, in the Greek republics; it was looked upon as a necessary evil, which obviated greater ones. Athenaeus, then, might say (Book XIII, Chapter 6): "Many persons who have had a part in the public government have spoken of courtezans, some blaming and others praising these women." It was not a disgrace for a citizen, however lofty he may have been in rank or character, to frequent courtezans, even before the age of Pericles, during which time this species of woman reigned, so to speak, over Greece. Even the relations which were to be had with them were not frowned upon. A Latin comic poet, in painting the manners of Athens, was almost within bounds when he openly declared that a young man ought to frequent houses of ill fame in order to complete his education: *non est flagitium scortari hominem adolescentulum*.

The comic poets, however, like the philosophers, felt a moral mission to punish debauchery by making it blush upon occasion; their epigrams alone placed a restraint upon the license of manners. "A courtesan is the plague of the one who keeps her!" cries the *Countryman* of Aristophanes. ". . . If anyone has ever loved a courtesan," says Anaxilas loftily, in his *Neottis*, "let him name for me a being who is more perverse."

The law, nevertheless, was not always silent or impotent where women of an evil way of life were concerned, whether the latter were hetairai, flute-players or dicteriades; not only did it relentlessly refuse them all the rights of the woman citizen, but it also prescribed certain

limits for their conduct. The Areopagus of Athens occasionally opened its eyes to the carryings-on of these women, and it often struck at them with merciless severity. It appears, from a number of passages in Alciphron, that there was a certain solidarity among the women in the presence of the law, and that a verdict of guilty for one of them had unpleasant consequences for all of her kind. It may be presumed that we have to do here with a proportional tax, applicable to every woman who had no right to the title of citizen. For these women were compelled, from time to time, to render to the coffers of the State what they had taken from those of the citizens. This singular legislation gave rise to a paradox, which we set forth here for what it is worth. According to certain scholars, the courtezans of Athens had formed a corporation, a college, which was composed of various orders of women occupied in the same trade and classified hierarchically under the statutes or rules relative to their contemptible industry. It was in this manner that the Areopagus was able to render the entire body responsible for the faults of its members. This tribunal would pass on the case when a courtesan had provoked a citizen to commit a reprehensible action, and even when her influence was looked upon as prejudicial to young people, to the point of causing them to dissipate their fortunes or to turn aside from the service of the state, or when she had given them lessons in immorality. The accusations sometimes carried capital penalties, and nothing more than the hatred or the vengeance of a disdained lover was necessary to raise a terrible storm against a woman who had no appeal, and who could be condemned without any opportunity to defend herself. "Try to demand something of Euthias in exchange for that which you give him," wrote the amiable Bacchis to her friend Myrrhine, "and you will see if you are not accused of having fired the fleet or undermined the foundations of the State!" It was this rascally Euthias who accused of impiety the beautiful Phryne; but the advocate Hyperides did not fear to undertake the defense of this courtesan, who paid him well for getting her off. "Thank the gods!" Bacchis naïvely wrote him, at the end of this remarkable suit, "our profits are legitimate, after the outcome of this unjust proceeding. You have acquired the most sacred rights to the recognition of all courtezans. If you will consent to publish the harangue which you pronounced on behalf of Phryne, we will engage to have erected to you, at our expense, a statue of gold in that place in Greece which you shall choose." History does not say whether

Hyperides published his harangue, or whether the courtezans assessed themselves in order to erect a golden statue to him in some temple of Venus Pandemos or of Venus Peribasia. An accusation against one courtesan thus struck terror into the group to which the accused belonged; for this accusation did not end with acquittal. An old courtesan named Theocris, who also dabbled in magic and amorous philtres, was condemned to death on the denunciation of Demosthenes, for having counselled slaves to deceive their masters and for having procured for them the means of doing so. This Theocris was, moreover, attached as a priestess to a temple of Venus. It was upon the occasion of Phryne's trial that Bacchis, in these terms, expressed her feelings: "If, for not having obtained from our lovers the silver for which we asked them, if, for having accorded our favors to those who pay for them generously, if by this we have become guilty of impiety towards the gods, then we must renounce all the advantages of our profession and make no more commerce of our charms."

The accusation of impiety was a most frequent one against courtezans; and this accusation was even more redoubtable in that it rested upon facts vague and easy to misrepresent. The courtezans fulfilled the functions of priestesses in certain temples and at certain festivals; nevertheless, their presence in a temple might be considered an act of impiety. "It is not permitted," says Demosthenes, in his plea against Neëra, "it is not permitted a woman with whom one has found an adulterer to enter our temples, even though our laws do permit a foreign woman and a slave to enter them, in order to view them or to pray in them. Women taken in adultery are the only ones to whom entrance to the temples is forbidden." Before Demosthenes, Isaeus, who was the great orator's master, had made a plea on the same subject and had solemnly declared that a common woman, who was at the service of everyone, and who led a life of debauchery, could not, without impiety, be brought into a temple or take part in the mysteries of religion. These unfortunate women thus found themselves exposed unceasingly to judicial prosecutions under pretext of impiety; they were, so to speak, beyond the law; and the Areopagus, before whom they were slandered by their powerful enemies, had no more scruple in condemning them than it had in absolving them. A decree of the Areopagus had forbidden prostitutes and slaves to bear surnames taken from the solemn games; and yet, there was at Athens an hetaira who called herself *Nemea*, for the reason that her lover had



been distinguished in the Nemean games, and perhaps, also, because she had placed herself under the auspices of Hercules. The Areopagus let her alone and did not dispute her name, which was one of good augury. Another decree of the Areopagus likewise had forbidden courtezans to celebrate the festivals of the gods at the same time as free women or citizens. However, at the festivals of Aphrodite, as Athenæus reports, on the word of the poet, Alexis, free women and courtezans mingled indiscriminately at table, at the public festivals which were given in honor of Venus. Thus, impiety was always and everywhere tracking down the courtezans, who escaped these snares only by good fortune, rather than by cleverness. This difficult situation, imposed upon them as a penalty for being their own mistresses, explains the number and the costliness of the offerings which they made to the gods, in order to obtain the protection of the latter.

The law spared no humiliation to courtezans. Children who were born to them, the same as the sons of concubines, shared their ignominy; it was a stain of which one could be washed free only after having gloriously served the State. The personal condition of concubines differed essentially from that of courtezans, but the condition of the children of one and the other class was always very nearly identical. Bastards, no matter who their mother was (and the number of bastards was considerable at Athens, by reason of the number of courtezans), —the bastards found themselves practically cut off from the free population; they had no special costume or distinctive marks, but in their infancy, they played and took their exercise apart, upon a tract of land adjoining the temple of Hercules, who was regarded as the god of bastardy. When they reached the age of a man, they were not able to inherit property; they had not the right to speak before the people, they might not become citizens. Finally, the bastards of courtezans (Plutarch mentions this fact in his *Life of Solon*), as a crowning mark of infamy, were not obliged to provide for their parents; the son was bound to no filial duty toward his father and mother, since these had been equally lacking in paternal and maternal duty with regard to him. This is the reason why the greater number of prostitutes exposed their new-born children in the street and thus consigned them to a fate which was less unkind. This manner of dealing with offspring was so much a matter of course that, in the *Dialogues of Courtezans*, Lucian makes quite an honorable exception in favor of one of his heroines, who says to her companion: "I must

bring up a child, for I do not believe that I would expose one to whom I had given birth." While Euclid was archon, the orator Aristophon caused to be promulgated a law which declared a bastard anyone who could not prove that he had been born of a citizen or a free woman. And so, jesting about this excess of severity towards bastards, the comic poet Calliades brings the unfortunate ones upon the stage, and even represents himself as a son of the courtesan, Chloris.

Solon, in regulating Prostitution, had imposed upon it salutary restraints, and had proposed to keep at a distance the wretched traders in debauchery, who would have created an infamous industry by corrupting girls and boys. He thereupon enacted a law, called the Law of Prostitution, which is not known to us except through the citation which Aeschines makes of it in one of his discourses: "Whoever shall become a procurer for a young man or woman belonging to the free class shall be punished with the extreme penalty." But this law was soon toned down and palliatives were invented which deprived it of its true character; until the pain of death came to be replaced by a fine of twenty drachmas, while the fine was a hundred for theft or for the rape of a free woman. The capital punishment was preserved only in text of the law, and Plutarch even affirms that depraved women, who openly made a trade of procuring mistresses for debauchees, were not included in the category of guilty ones whom this law was designed to affect. It was in vain that Aeschines demanded the application of a law which had never been wholly enforced. It was very difficult, as a matter of fact, to fix the point at which the crime began which this terrible law had been made to deal with, for custom in Greece authorized a lover to abduct his mistress, provided she consented to it and the parents placed no obstacle in his path. It was sufficient, then, to have in advance the agreement of the father and mother of a girl whom one wished to possess; one warned them of the day on which the abduction was to take place, and they made but a show of resistance. When a young girl or her mother had received a present from a man, this girl was no longer considered a virgin, even though her virginity may have been intact; she was no longer shown the same regard or the same respect, as though she already had begun to be a prostitute.

The Areopagus, which passed judgment on courtezans and their odious parasites, when the crime had been denounced by the voice of the people or by some citizen, did not deign to occupy itself with such

simple infractions of the law as a licentious populace, given over to bad manners and subject to the rigorous prescriptions of the police, might commit. Cognizance of infractions resulting from the practice of Prostitution was undoubtedly a matter pertaining to subordinate tribunals of the police. It was the police who saw to it that the rules relative to the habits which prostitutes must wear were observed, that the courtezans kept to the proper places in their promenades, that they paid the tax on their shameful trade and, in short, observed all the regulations which were conducive to public welfare.

## CHAPTER VI

THE courtezans of Athens formed a number of classes, so distinct among themselves that the laws which governed them varied of necessity according to the different categories of these women of pleasure. There were three principal classes, which were subdivided into a number of more or less distinct species: the *Dicteriades*, the *Auletrides*, and the *Hetairai*. The first were, in a manner, the slaves of Prostitution; the second were its auxiliaries, the third were its queens. There were the dicteriades, whom Solon collected in public houses of debauchery where, in consideration of the payment of a revenue fixed by the legislator, they became the property of anyone that entered these houses, which were called dicterions, in memory of Pasiphaë, wife of Minos, king of Crete (*Dicte*), who shut herself up in the belly of a bronze cow, to receive under this guise the caresses of a real bull. The auletrides, or flute-players, led a freer existence, since they went to practice their art at the public festivals, when called upon to do so; they entered the interior of the house and invaded the private lives of citizens; their music, their songs and their dances had no other object than to heat and exalt the senses of the guests, who often made these entertainers come and take a seat beside them. The hetairai were, without doubt, courtezans trafficking in their charms, abandoning themselves shamelessly to those who paid, but they manifested, nevertheless, a certain degree of volition; they did not sell themselves to the first comer; they had their preferences and their aversions; they never abnegated their freedom of choice; they belonged only to those who knew how to please them or to win their favor. Moreover, by reason of their spirit, their education and their exquisite politeness, they were often fitted to take their place as equals beside the most eminent men of Greece.

These three classes of courtezans would have found not the least thing in common, if it had not been for their common purpose: they all three served to gratify the sensual appetites of the Athenians, from the most illustrious down to the very lowest. There were degrees of Prostitution, as there were among the people, and the proud hetairai of the *Ceramicus* differed as much from the vile dicteriades of the Piræus as the brilliant Alcibiades differed from a gross leather mer-



chant. If the documents concerning the legislation on Athenian debauchery are rare and imperfect, we are still able to supplement them, in our minds, by comparing the diverse conditions of the women who made a trade of their bodies. The hetairai, those rich and puissant sovereigns, who included in their clientele the generals of armies, magistrates, poets and philosophers, were answerable only to the Areopagus, whereas the auletrides and the dicteriades were more ordinarily referred to subordinate tribunals; these last, subjected to a sort of infamous servitude, still had preserved the right to have judges beyond the confines of their obscene prison. The greater part of the dicteriades and the auletrides were foreign women; the greater part were of obscure and servile birth; in any case, an Athenian woman who, through misery, vice or folly, fell into this abject class of prostitutes, thereby renounced her name, her rank, her country. On the other hand, the Greek hetaira, who was not subject to the same brand, was often obstinate in preserving her title of citizen, and it required nothing less than a writ from the Areopagus to procure her arrest. Demosthenes, pleading against the courtesan, Neëra, cried out with indignation: "A woman who gives herself to men, who follows everywhere those who pay, of what is such a woman not capable? Must she not lend herself to all the tastes of those to whom she abandons herself? Such a woman, recognized, publicly and generally, over all the earth, as being a prostitute, will you assert that she is a citizen?"

It appeared that all the courtezans, whatever their condition, were considered as devoted to a public service and as being absolutely dependent upon the people; for they might not leave the territory of the republic without having asked and obtained a permission which the archons often only accorded them upon guarantees that would assure their return. Under certain circumstances, the college of courtezans was declared useful and necessary to the State. Indeed, these courtezans soon had so multiplied at Athens and throughout Attica that the annual tax which each one paid came to represent a considerable revenue. This special tax (*pornicon telos*) which the orator Aeschines tells us is very ancient, though he does not attribute its establishment to Solon, was placed each year in the hands of speculators who undertook to collect it. By paying this tax, the courtezans purchased the right to public tolerance and protection. It might be thought that a tax of this nature would be a direct offense to the feelings of virtuous citizens; but the latter ended by becoming accus-

tomed to it, and the city administration did not blush at having frequent recourse to this shameful source of revenue. As for the collectors of the tax, they overlooked nothing that would make the returns as large as possible. It may be supposed, therefore, that they invented a number of sumptuary ordinances, which would have the effect of increasing fines and creating new offenses subject to fine. The courtezans and the collectors of the *pornicontelos* were always at war; the vexations inflicted by the latter seemed to grow in the degree to which the former became more submissive and resigned; and every year, Prostitution and the income from the tax increased in equal proportions.

Athenaeus states positively, that the public women, probably the dieteriades, could not leave their habitations until after sunset, an hour at which a matron would not have dared show herself in the streets without risking her reputation. But one should not take literally this passage of Athenaeus, for all the courtezans who dwelt on the Piraeus, beyond the walls of the city, promenaded night and morning on the wharves. But it is possible these women were not admitted to the city (to make purchases and not to prostitute themselves) except at the end of the day, when the shades of night would cover them with a decent veil. In any case, they might not pass the night within the city, and they ran the risk of a penalty in case they were found there after a certain hour. It was likewise forbidden them to commit an act of debauchery in the neighborhood of the dwellings of law-abiding citizens. This custom existed in the cities of the Orient from the highest antiquity, and it was retained at Athens, where the Areopagus strove to impose limits on legal Prostitution. The neighborhood of the Piraeus had been assigned as the home for this variety of Prostitution. It formed a sort of city, composed of fishermen's cabins, merchant's shops, hostelries, the great houses of Prostitution and little houses of pleasure. The floating population of this suburb of Athens included strangers, libertines, gamblers and vagabonds; and this was, for the courtezans, an ardent and lucrative clientele. The latter dwelt here, among their every-day customers, and had no cause to go seek adventures in the city, under the frowning eyes of magistrates and matrons; they were marvelously well off at the Piraeus, and they grew rich there, off all the countries in the world. This affluence, detrimental to the interests of all, changed for some of them the scene of their promenades; the proudest and most triumphant came to Athens, to show themselves in the Ceramicus.

The Ceramicus, of which the hetairai made use upon leaving the Piraeus to the flute-players and the dicteriades, was not that beautiful quarter of Athens which drew its name from Ceramus, son of Bacchus and of Ariadne. It was a suburb which included the garden of the Academy and the sepulchres of those citizens who had died in battle. It extended the length of the surrounding wall, from the gate of the Ceramicus to the Dipylon; there, thickets of green trees and porticoes adorned with statues and inscriptions offered a cool shelter against the heat of the day. The courtezans of the first rank came to promenade and to sit in this place, which they appropriated to themselves, as though they had conquered it from the illustrious dead who reposed beneath them. This was soon the open market of elegant Prostitution. One went there to seek fortune or to begin liaisons. One made appointments to meet there and carried on love affairs in the place. When a young Athenian had noticed a certain hetaira whose favors he wanted, he wrote upon the wall of the Ceramicus the name of this beauty, adding certain flattering epithets; Lucian, Alciphron and Aristophanes make allusion to this singular custom. The courtesan sent her slave to see the names which had been written up in the morning, and when she found her own, she had but to take her place in front of the inscription in order to announce that she was disposed to take a lover. The latter had but to show himself and to state his terms, which were not always accepted, for the hetairai in vogue did not all have the same rate, and they also permitted themselves a certain play of fancy. And so, many declarations of love ended only in the confusion of those who had addressed them. It is easy to understand how the courtezans, by their refusal or their disdain, made many implacable enemies.

The dicteriades and the flute-players, as well as the hetairai of the lowest class, seeing that the most advantageous flirtations were carried on at the Ceramicus, took the risk of coming there, or at least of approaching the place; they abandoned, successively, the port of the Piraeus, that of Phalerum, the borough of Sciron and the outskirts of Athens, to dispute the place with the hetairai of the aristocracy, who in turn fled and ended by seeking refuge in the city. The laws which forbade them to appear in courtesan's costume were, in fact, abolished, since they ceased to be enforced. One might see, then, the most contemptible prostitutes cluttering the approaches to the Dipylon and there tranquilly carrying on their odious commerce. The

shade of the Ceramicus and the lawns which surrounded the tombs were only too favorable to the practice of Prostitution, which had taken over this glorious cemetery! "It is at the gate of the Ceramicus," says Hesychius, "that the courtezans keep shop." Lucian is equally explicit: "At the end of the Ceramicus," he says, "to the right of the Dipylon, is the great market of hetairai." There was buying and selling at every price, and sometimes the merchandise was delivered on the spot, in the shadow of some monument, erected to a great citizen who had died on the field of battle. In the evening, under cover of darkness, the earth naked or covered with grass, offered a permanent arena for this ignoble traffic in debauchery, and sometimes a belated passer-by, who on a moonless night happened to be crossing the Ceramicus and hastening his steps through the garden of the Academy, must have believed it was the manes of the dead groaning around these profaned tombs.

The invasion of the Ceramicus by the public women had by no means depopulated the Piræus; there still remained a great number of these women in that vast suburb, which recruited its inhabitants from among the travelers and merchants of all parts of the known world. It was the same at the port of Phalerum and on the hill of Sciron, where as many courtezans as strangers came streaming in. Their principal rendezvous was a great square which opened on a part of the Piræus and which overlooked the citadel. This square, surrounded by porticoes, under which were to be seen only dice-players, sleepers and awakened philosophers, became filled, toward nightfall, with a throng of women, almost all foreigners, some veiled, others half naked, who standing motionless or seated, coming or going, silent or flirtatious, obscene or reserved, made their appeal to the desires of the passers-by. The temple of Venus Pandemos, erected on this spot by Solon, seemed to preside over this variety of commerce, which was carried on openly. When the courtesan wished to overcome resistance, obtain a higher price or earnest-money, she would invoke Venus under the name of Pytho, although this Pytho was a goddess wholly distinct from Venus in the Greek mythology; they confounded one with the other, as though to express the fact that persuasion was inseparable from love. So far as that was concerned, one might behold, in the sanctuary of the temple, the shining marble statues of the two goddesses, which had been placed there in the heart of their amorous empire. Many contracts which Venus and her companion deities had



witnessed were afterwards carried out under the portico of the temple or on the sea-shore, or, it may be, at the foot of that long wall constructed by Themistocles to join the Piræus to the city of Athens.

The reputation of the Piræus for Prostitution and hetairism was so well established that Themistocles, the son of a courtesan, unblushingly advertized his birth by promenading from the Piræus to the Ceramicus in a magnificent chariot, drawn by four hetairai as his steeds. Athenæus reports this incredible fact upon the testimony of Idomeneus, who doubted it himself. A number of commentators have seen in this passage cited by Athenæus, not a chariot drawn by courtesans, but courtesans seated in a chariot by Themistocles' side. But we shall hesitate to hold, against Athenæus, that this was an unusual manner which Themistocles had thought up of yoking courtesans to his chariot. Besides the debauches in the open air, there were at the Piræus others which took place behind closed doors. The great dicterion, founded by Solon near the sanctuary of Pandemos, had soon proved insufficient to the needs of a corrupt age. A multitude of others had been established, without any legal violation, under the auspices of the fiscal law protecting the middleman of Prostitution. The dicterions, which were to be encountered at every step in the streets of the Piræus and the other suburbs, were to be recognized by their sign, which was everywhere the same, and which differed only in its dimensions; it was always the obscene attribute of Priapus which characterized these evil places. It was not possible to enter without avowing openly what one was seeking. A Greek philosopher perceived a young man creeping into one of these resorts; he called him by name; the young man dropped his head in shame. "Courage!" the philosopher cried to him, "your blushes are the beginnings of virtue." Besides the public houses, there were special houses where the hetairai were to be rented for purposes of their trade; they did not remain constantly, but merely passed a few days and a few nights with their friends. There was nothing but feasting, dancing and music in these voluptuous retreats, which one might not enter without paying. Alciphron has preserved a letter of Panope written to her husband Euthybulus: "Your lightness, your inconstancy, your taste for pleasure leads you to neglect me as well as your children, to give yourself over entirely to that passion inspired in you by Galene, daughter of a fisherman, who came here from Hermione to rent a house and sell her charms at the Piræus, where she makes commerce

of them to the great detriment of all our poor youth; mariners go to commit debauchery with her, they load her down with presents, and she refuses nothing: she is an all-absorbing gulf."

The police of manners, which had circumscribed, in certain quarters, the scandalous commerce of prostitutes, had inflicted on these prostitutes as on slaves the degradation of certain vestments, destined to render them recognizable everywhere. This sumptuary law of Prostitution appears to have existed in all the cities of Greece and its colonies; but if certain colors had come to signify, in a certain manner, the public defiance of the women who wore them, these colors were not the same at Athens, at Sparta, at Syracuse and elsewhere. It was, probably, Solon who first assigned a characteristic costume to the slaves whom he devoted to Prostitution. This costume was probably made up of brilliant colors, for the women whom the legislator had brought from the Orient for the use of the state first showed themselves clad in their national habit, composed of woollen stuffs or varicolored silk. Solon's law was, therefore, but the sanction of an ancient custom, and the Areopagus, in formulating this law, declared that the courtezans should wear in the future a *flowery* costume. There were many variations, each one interpreting the text of the law to suit herself. According to some, they must not appear in public except with crowns and garlands of flowers; according to others, they must wear painted flowers on the clothing; sometimes they were content with gayly-striped accoutrements; sometimes they went clad in purple and gold, resembling baskets of blooming flowers. But sumptuary legislation came to take a hand in this unbridled display; it forbade prostitutes to wear robes of a single hue, to make use of precious stuffs such as scarlet, and to display gold jewelry when they sauntered forth from their houses. The prohibition of purple robes and golden ornaments was not, however, general for the prostitutes of all the Greek cities; for at Syracuse, the decent women only might not wear vestments bordered with purple or other striking colors or adorned with gold, which served as the sign of Prostitution; at Sparta, similar prohibitions were enforced for good women: "I praise the ancient city of the Lacedæmonians," says St. Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagog*, Book II, Chapter 10,) "which permits courtezans flowery habits and golden jewelry, while forbidding to married women this luxury of the toilet, which it reserves for courtezans alone." Athenæus reproduces a passage of Philarchus, who, in the twenty-fifth book of his *Histories*,

approves a similar law which existed among the Syracusans: varied colors, purple hems and golden ornaments made up the obligatory costume for Syracusan hetairai.

We see, moreover, from the most remote antiquity, the lecheresses of the Bible adorning themselves with flowers and brilliant stuffs; Solon, then, had done nothing but conform to the manners of the Orient by prescribing that prostitutes should not leave off their Oriental costume. Zaleucus, the legislator of the Locrians, was but following the system of Solon, when he likewise imposed on the prostitutes of his Greek colony the stigmata of flowery costumes, as Diodorus Siculus reports. Zaleucus, the disciple of Pythagoras, had no great sympathy for the sensual passions, and if he tolerated Prostitution by branding it, it was in order not to leave an excuse for adultery, which he punished by gouging out the eyes of the guilty one. Suidas, in his Lexicon, speaks of *flowering courtezans*, that is to say, in accordance with the explanation which he himself gives, "wearing flowery robes, variegated, painted with diverse colors, for a law existed at Athens ordering prostitutes to wear flowery vestments, adorned with flowers or with various hues, so that this adornment might serve to designate courtezans at the first glance of the eye." It seems probable that the courtezans of Athens showed themselves crowned with roses, since crowns of gold had been denied under pain of fine. "If an hetaira," says the rhetorician Hermogenes, in his *Rhetoric*, "wears golden jewelry, these jewels shall be confiscated for the profit of the republic." In the same manner crowns of gold and gilded habits which a prostitute might dare to wear publicly were subject to confiscation. A law of Philip of Macedon inflicted a fine of one thousand drachmas, about one thousand francs in our money, on a courtesan who should assume the airs of a princess by crowning herself with gold. These sumptuary laws were, doubtless, but rarely enforced, and the rich hetairai, who were the queens of learned and lettered Greece, had, certainly, nothing to fear from these police regulations to which the dicterides found themselves rigorously subjected.

The ordinary costume of Athenian women of distinction differed essentially from that of foreign women of an evil way of life. This costume, at once elegant and refined, was composed of three pieces of clothing: the tunic, the robe, and the mantle; the white tunic, of linen or of wool, was attached with buttons over the shoulders and fastened over the breast with a large girdle, falling in wavy folds to the

feet; the robe, shorter than the tunic, was fastened over the loins by a large ribbon and ended below, like the tunic, in bands or stripes of different colors, and was adorned sometimes with sleeves, which covered only a part of the arm; the mantle of cloth, sometimes drawn back in the form of a scarf, sometimes draped over the body, seemed made to outline the form. They employed at first, as Barthélemy, in his *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*, informs us, precious stuffs with the brilliancy of gold, or it may be Asiatic stuffs on which bloomed the most beautiful flowers with the most life-like hues; but these stuffs were soon exclusively reserved for the vestments with which the statues of the gods were covered, or for the theatrical costumes. Finally, by way of forbidding to decent women the employment of these flowered stuffs, the laws ordered women of an evil way of life to make use of them. These latter had, also, the privilege of immodesty, and they might descend into the street with flowing hair, the bosom uncovered, and the rest of the body barely hidden under a veil of gauze. At Sparta, on the contrary, the courtezans must be amply clad in trailing robes, laden with ornaments of the goldsmith's art, for the costume of the Lacedæmonian women was as simple as it was light. This costume consisted of a short tunic and a narrow robe, falling to the ankles; but the young girls, who took part in all the games of strength and agility which Spartan education rendered obligatory for men, were even more lightly clad; their tunic without sleeves, attached at the shoulders with clasps of metal and lifted above the knee by a girdle, was open at the bottom on each side, in such a manner that half the body remained uncovered; when these beautiful and robust girls took their exercise by wrestling, running and leaping, the most lascivious courtezans would have had no advantage over them.

Finally, one of the modes which most distinctively characterized the Greek courtezans, although this mode was not prescribed in the sumptuary laws, was the yellow color of their hair.\* They tinted it with saffron or with other plants which, out of the brunettes which they ordinarily were, made them blondes. The comic poet Menander makes jests at those blond locks, which were sometimes but false coiffures, veritable perukes, borrowed from the hair of northern races or made up of gilded strands. St. Clement of Alexandria asserts, in becoming terms, that it is a shame for a modest women to dye her hair and to give it a blond color. One might deduce from this passage

\**Translator's Note*:—"Gentlemen prefer," etc.



of St. Clement that the respectable women had imitated this coiffure, which the courtezans had adopted in order to make themselves look like the goddesses, whom poets, painters and sculptors represented with locks of gold. These refinements of the toilet undoubtedly called for the services of numerous slaves, very expert in the art, although an ancient law of Athens forbade prostitutes to make use of the services of hired women or of slaves. This law, which often was not enforced, degraded a free woman who put herself on a level with the prostitute, and deprived her of the title of citizen, by confiscating her as a slave for the profit of the state. It appeared that the woman citizen, by the mere fact of service in the house of a prostitute, became a prostitute herself and might be employed in the dicterions. But in spite of this severe law, the courtezans never lacked servants, and these latter, young or old, were ordinarily more perverted than the prostitutes whom they assisted in this shameful industry.

## CHAPTER VII

THERE was such a social distance between the condition of the inmate of a dicterion and that of an hetaira that the first, relegated to the category of slave, freed or foreign, led in her debauchery and obscurity an indescribable existence, while the second, although deprived of rank and the title of citizen, lived in the society of the most eminent and the most cultured men of Greece. We may presume, then, that the writers, poets, or moralists, who composed voluminous treatises on the courtezans of their times, did not deign to occupy themselves with the dicteriades, with the exception of a few marked by the singularity of their character and their manners for the attention of those curious ones interested in an erotic anecdote. These anecdotes were the favorite form of entertainment of the libertines of Athens; and many authors were led to embody them in their works; unfortunately, there have come down to us none of those collections devoted to the history of Prostitution, except the isolated shreds and scattered details which Athenaeus has included in book XIII of his *Deipnosophistai*.<sup>\*</sup> We doubtless would not have found anything in particular with reference to the dicteriades in the writings which Aristophanes, Apollodorus, Ammonius, Antiphones and Gorgias composed, in different literary genres, on the courtezans of Athens. It was the hetairai, and the most famous among them, who furnished the materials for these pornographic compilations. Callistratus had edited the *History of Courtezans* as seriously as Plutarch had his *Lives of Famous Men*; Macho had collected the bon mots of hetairai of renown; many comic poets had represented on the stage the disorderly carryings-on of these women, who were gallant rather than public characters: Diocles in his *Thalatta*, Herecrates in his *Corianno*, Menander in his *Thais*, Eubulus in his *Clepsydra*. But if we still had those numerous works which Athenaeus causes us to regret, we should not be better instructed on the subject of the dicteriades, who succeeded one another in their hideous trade without leaving any personal traces of their infamy. Those who deserved to be renowned on account of their vices and their adventures would awaken only contempt in the memory of men.

<sup>\*</sup>Translator's Note:—*Deipnosophistes*: dinner-sage. The *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaeus was a sort of cook-book, or gourmet's treasury.

Aristophanes of Byzantium, Apollodorus and Gorgias were able to count only a hundred and thirty-five hetairai who had enjoyed some reputation at Athens, and whose deeds might be worthy of being handed down to posterity; but this small number of celebrities only causes to stand out the more that multitude of women who at Athens plied the trade of Prostitution, and who were little concerned with the honor of being mentioned in history, provided they were granted the shame of acquiring a fortune. There was in Athens so great a number of courtezans, on the word of Athenaeus, that no other city, however populous it might have been, could possibly have produced so many. Athenaeus, in generalizing thus, includes in this number the dicteriades as well as the hetairai and the flute-players. Athenaeus, however, feels the need of distinguishing between these three varieties of women of pleasure, and he even appears to divide the dicteriades into two classes, one of which becomes the lowest order of hetairai (*meta hetairon*), while the other peoples the houses of ill fame (*tas epiton oidematon*). We are disposed to conclude, from these nuances of designation, that the dicteriades who lent their paid presence to the houses of debauchery, and who hired themselves out in these public establishments, were not the same as those who sold themselves on their own account, and who prostituted themselves in the wine shops, in the barber shops, under the porticoes, in the fields about the tombs. These popular Bacchantes, who were to be seen wandering of an evening in segregated places, had been nicknamed *she-wolves*, either because they went searching for prey in the darkness, like hungry wolves, or because they announced their presence and state of availability by the cries of a wild beast. This, at least, is the etymology which Dionysius of Halicarnassus regards as the most likely one.

The dicteriades who were shut up were almost always foreign women, slaves who had been purchased here, there and everywhere by a speculator; the free dicteriades, on the contrary, were Greeks whom vice, idleness, or misery had caused to fall into this degree of abasement and who endeavored, with a remnant of modesty, to conceal the degrading trade by which they lived. These unhappy ones, who had nothing but chance to protect them in their sublunary amours, met in their nocturnal quests only sailors, freed men and vagabonds, who were no less despicable than themselves. It is easy to perceive that they would endeavor to hold out as long as possible against the insult of the flowery costume and the blond peruke, which

were the stigmata attaching to the name of courtesan.\* They had, moreover, no need of an exterior sign to summon their customers, since they did not show themselves but scurried in the shadows, where one had to grope his way to find them. It made little difference, then, so far as their trade was concerned, whether they were young or old, ugly or beautiful, well-adorned or ill; the night covered everything, and the customer half-drunk did not demand to see more clearly. In the dicterions, on the contrary, over which a sort of municipal police supervision was exercised, nothing was refused the sight, and everything which might more particularly commend the inhabitants of the place was adopted. Xenarchus and Eubulus picture for us these naked women, lined up in a row in the sanctuary of debauchery, with nothing in the way of vestment except the long transparent veils which afforded no obstacle to the eye. Some, through a refinement of lubricity, had the face veiled, the bosom imprisoned in a fine tissue which outlined the form, and the rest of the body uncovered. Eubulus compares them to the nymphs whom Eridanus saw sporting over the waves. It was not at night, but by day, in the full light of the sun, that the dicterions placed in evidence the wealth of their immodest treasures. This show of nudities served as a sign to the houses of debauchery, better than the painted or sculptured phallus which decorated the door; but according to other archæologists, these voluptuous spectacles were to be seen only in the inner court.

There were, undoubtedly, dicterions at Athens which were more or less disorderly, especially after Prostitution had become firmly established; but in the beginning, the most republican equality reigned in these establishments conducted at the expense of the State. The price was uniform for all visitors, and this price was not very high. Philemon, in his *Adelphi*, makes it no higher than an obole, which was equal to three and a half cents in our money. "Solon has purchased women," says Philemon, "and has placed them in houses where, provided with all that is necessary, they have become the common property of those that want them. There they are in a state of simple nature, they will tell you: no surprise, you see everything! Are you not to be congratulated? The door opens at your will; all you need is an obole. Come on, enter, there is no standing on ceremony here, no lackadaisical manners; she whom you choose will receive you in her

\**Translator's Note*:—The occasional prostitute is of ancient date. In modern economic society, occasional prostitution varies often with seasonal occupation.



arms when you will and as you will." Eubulus composed his Greek comedies, of which we have but fragments, 370 years before Christ, and in his time, the entry fee had not yet risen greatly in the dicterions; moreover, there was not the least risk to run. It would seem that Solon had looked after this. "There are beautiful girls there," says Eubulus, "whom you may purchase at your pleasure for a few crowns, and that without the least danger." (*A quibus tuto ac sine periculo licet tibi pauculis nummis voluptaten emere*; but the Latin translation does not say as much as the Greek.) We have no more precise knowledge than this with respect to the prices current in the houses of ill fame at Athens, but we may presume that these prices often varied by reason of the tax which the Senate imposed on the proprietors of the dicterions. These houses, moreover, were not frequented solely by sailors and by those merchants whom the commercial fleets of all countries brought to the Piræus; the most distinguished citizens, when they were drunk or when the demon of debauchery laid hold on them, did not fear to glide, their mantles over their faces, into the houses of tolerance founded by Solon. The doors of these houses remained open day and night; they were not guarded, like the others, by a dog chained in the vestibule; a woollen curtain of striking colors prevented passers-by from obtaining indiscreet glimpses of the court, surrounded by open porticoes, under which the women waited, standing, seated on couches, occupied in polishing their nails, in smoothing their hair, in rouging themselves, in removing superfluous hair, in perfuming themselves, in dissimulating their physical defects by stressing their hidden beauties. Ordinarily, an old Thessalian woman who was somewhat of a sorceress, and who sold philtres or perfumes, remained seated behind the curtain, and it was her mission to introduce visitors, after being informed of their tastes and of the offers they had to make.

It does not appear that the number of the dicterions was diminished by the enactments of Solon and the Areopagus. This particular industry possessed the right of creating, at least outside the city, establishments of its own sort and of organizing these establishments for the benefit of the middleman, provided the tax was faithfully paid into the public treasury. This tax may have been and, in all probability was, a fixed one payable by the overseer of the dicteriades. There is nothing to lead us to suspect that this was a graduated tax. A popular house produced fine revenues for its proprietor; the latter was not necessarily a foreigner, but often a citizen of Athens, who, animated

by the love of gain, devoted his money to this villainous speculation and grew rich from the products of public debauchery, by conducting, under a false name, a shop of Prostitution. The comic poets hold up to the contempt of honest folk the avaricious and cowardly character of those who rented their houses to the dicteriadés; the master of such a house was called *pornobosceion*. Competition grew, and the old courtezans, who could no longer earn anything on their own account, soon came to think of utilizing at least their experience. And so, there were strange schools which grew up in the suburbs of Athens; in them were taught openly the arts and secrets of Prostitution, without the magistrates interfering to repress such disorderly institutions. The mistresses of these schools of immorality enrolled the unfortunate ones whom they only too often had debauched, and the education which was given to these pupils explained the title of *matrons*, brazenly given to their perverse instructors. Alexis, in a comedy entitled *Isostasion*, of which Athenaeus has preserved for us a few fragments, has given us a picturesque account of the artifices which these matrons employed in the metamorphosis of their pupils: "They take into their house young girls who have not yet learned their trade, and they soon transform the latter to the point of altering not merely their sentiments, but even their faces and their figures. If a novice is inclined to be small, they sew a thick sole of cork into her slippers. If she is too tall, they make her wear a very thin slipper and teach her to carry her head low upon her shoulders, which diminishes her figure somewhat. If she is lacking in the haunches, they apply above them a bit of trimming which sets them off in such a manner that those who see her are unable to refrain from exclaiming: 'My word! but there's a pretty rump!' If she has a large belly, by means of stays, much like those contrivances which are employed in stage performances, they hold it up. If she has russet hair, they blacken it with soot; if she has black hair they bleach it with white lead; if she has a complexion that is too blond, they color it. But if she has some particular beauty in a certain part of the body, they do all they can to heighten these natural charms. If she has pretty teeth, they force her to smile, so that spectators may perceive how pretty her mouth is; and if she does not like to smile, they keep her in the house all day with a sprig of myrtle between her lips, such as cooks ordinarily have when they sell their she-goat-heads in the market-place, so that she is finally obliged to show her teeth whether she will or no." The matrons excelled in the

refinements of coquetry and of the toilet, the object of which was to awaken the desires and the curiosity of their clients; they did not limit themselves, in their art, to satisfying merely the eyes; they taught their pupils everything which voluptuousness had been able to invent that was most ingenious, most bizarre, and most infamous. Athenaeus, who speaks, perhaps, but from hearsay, indulges in a formal eulogy of these women of pleasure, by saying: "You will be pleased with the women who work in the dicterions."

The dicterions, whatever their character, enjoyed the privilege of inviolability; they were looked upon as places of asylum, in which the citizen found himself under the protection of public hospitality. No one had the right to invade them to commit an act of violence. Debtors there found shelter from their creditors, and the law erected a sort of moral barrier between civil life and this secret one, which began at the door of the dicterion. A married woman could not enter these inviolable retreats to seek her husband; a father had not the right to go there to surprise his son. Once the guest of the dicterion had passed the threshold of this mysterious retreat, he became, in a manner, sacred, and he lost, for the time he was there, his individual character, his name, his personality. "The law does not permit," says Demosthenes in his plea against Neëra, "that anyone be surprised in adultery with those women who are in a house of Prostitution, or who have set themselves up to carry on the same traffic in a public place." And yet, the prostitutes were foreign women, slaves and freed-women; it was not, therefore, they whom the law spared and appeared to respect, it was the citizens who came to them, by virtue of a tacit contract, under safeguard of the law, to accomplish an act or which they had to answer only to themselves. It is permissible to suppose that pleasure in Greece was a part of religion and its rites; this was why Solon had placed the temple of Venus Pandemos beside the dicterion, so that the goddess might be able to survey, at once, what was passing in the one place and in the other. In accordance with the ideas of Venus' fervent worshipers, man was sacred to the goddess as soon as he gave himself to the practices of her cult, which was the same in the temple as in the dicterions.

The ancient authors furnish us with many details regarding the dicteriades who were not shut up in houses and the subordinate hetairai, who practiced a vagabond Prostitution, or who set themselves up audaciously in their own dwellings. Not only do we know

what were the very prices of their favors, their ordinary habits in their amours, the various phases of their dissolute existence, but we even know their nicknames and the origin of those names, which described in terms a bit too free, it may be, their intimate manners. The wages of the free dicteraiades and of hetairai of the lower order were not at all fixed or even graduated according to the beauty and the merits of each. This wage was not always paid in silver or gold coin; it even more often took the form of a present, which the prostitute demanded before giving herself, and sometimes after she had given herself. Hence came the importance of the wage, which established, first of all, the rank which the courtesan held in the corporation of the hetairai; but the true distinction which these women might claim among themselves, and which the men who dealt with them ordinarily were careful to observe, was, rather, one based upon mind, talents and education. Those who lived in the wine shops, among the drunken sailors and the shaggy-breasted fishermen, were not permitted to demand large amounts; some contented themselves with a basket of fish, others with an amphora of wine; they also had their whims, and one day they would prostitute themselves gratis in honor of Venus, only to charge double on the following day. The courtesans of Lucian initiate us into all these variations of salary, which they would demand, sometimes, in an imperious tone, and which, sometimes, they would solicit with the humblest air. "Has anyone ever seen," cries with indignation one of these hetairai, "anyone take a courtesan for a whole night and give her five drachmas (about five francs)\* in pay!" Another of these hetairai, Chericlea, was so complacent that she accorded everything and demanded nothing. Lucian declares, in his *Toxaris*, that a girl with a finer disposition was never to be seen.

When the hetairai of the wine shops on the Piræus wished to please in order to get a present, they would put on the most caressing airs, assume the most honeyed tone and the most teasing pose: "Are you an old man?" says Xenarchos, quoted by Athenæus, "they will call you *papa*; are you young? they will call you *little brother*." One should see the counsels which the old courtesan gives to her daughter, in Lucian: "You are faithful to Chereas and you receive no other man; you have refused two minæ from the laborer of Acharnae, one mina from Antiphon," etc. Now a mina represented one hundred francs in our money,\*\* and one does not know whether to be more astonished at

\*Translator's Note:—Or one dollar.

\*\*Translator's Note:—A little less than \$18.



the generosity of the laborer of Acharnae or at the fidelity of this hetaira to her lover Chereas. Macho, who collected with care the bon mots of courtezans, tells us that Moerichus did business with Phryne of Thespia, who ended by being content with a mina, that is to say, with a hundred francs: "It is a' good deal!" Moerichus says to her; "these last days you have taken in only two staters in gold (about forty francs)\* from a stranger?" . . . "Well enough!" is Phryne's lively response, "wait till I am in a good humor, and I shall not ask you for any more." Gorgias, in his work on the courtezans of Athens, had mentioned a hetaira of the lowest order, named *Leme*, that is to say, the Bleary-Eyed, who was a mistress of the orator Ithatocles, but who, nevertheless, prostituted herself to all comers for two drachmas,\*\* which won for her the surnames *Didrachma* and *Panorama*. Finally, if one is to believe Athenaeus, Laïs, having become an old woman and being forced to continue her trade by reducing the price of her frayed charms, no longer received more than one stater in gold, from those rare visitors who desired to see to what point of degradation a once beauteous and celebrated hetaira had fallen. This was, in general, the fate of courtezans; after being elevated to the highest rung of fortune and that reputation which an hetaira might acquire, after having seen at their feet poets, generals and even kings, they descended rapidly the ladder of this factitious prosperity, to end, old and despised, in abandonment and oblivion. The dicterion then opened as a refuge to these ruins of beauty and of love. It was thus that Glycere ended, who had been loved by the poet Menander. Happy those who had amassed enough to assure them of an independent and peaceful old age, happy those who, like Scione, Hippaphesis, Theoclea, Psamothé, Lagispe, Anthéa, and Philyra renounced the trade of an hetaira before their trade had said good-by to them! Lysias, in his oration against Laïs, warmly congratulates these hetairai, who were yet young, on their attempt to become respectable women.

The courtezans who were not placed on sale in the dicterions, frequently obtained so much money for their services, even from fishermen and merchants, that these poor victims allowed themselves to be

\**Translator's Note*:—The original value of the stater was a little over seventy cents; later, the coin came to be worth a little more than \$3.50. The sum referred to here is around \$8.

\*\**Translator's Note*:—About thirty-five cents.

entirely despoiled, only to see themselves replaced by others, who were themselves soon to be replaced by others still. "You have forgotten," sorrowfully wrote the villager, Anicetus, to the avaricious Phebian, who had become enriched at his expense, and who no longer deigned to give him so much as a look, "you have forgotten the baskets of figs, the fresh cheeses, the fine chickens which I sent you? All the ease that you enjoy, are you not indebted for it to me? But for me there is left only shame and misery." Alciphron, who has preserved for us this letter, as a monument to the courtezans' cruel covetousness, shows us also the fisherman, Thalasserus, in love with a singer and sending the latter every day the fish which he has caught. Athenaeus cites the verses of Anaxilas, who, in *Neottis*, had painted a frightful portrait of the courtezans of his time: "Yes, all these hetairai are such sphinxes that, far from talking openly they only speak in enigmas; they caress you, they talk to you of love, or the pleasure which you give them; but in the end, they say to you: 'My dear, I need a footstool, a tripod, a table with four legs, a little servant maid with two feet.' He who understands all this may spare himself these annoyances, and may esteem himself happy indeed to have been, perhaps, the only one to escape shipwreck in spite of her; but he who hopes for a true return on what he pays soon finds that he is the prey of a monster." This passage from a Greek poem, which like so many others has disappeared, has caused the commentator to believe that the nickname of *Sphinx*, which designated the hetairai in general, had been applied to them on account of their enigmatic requests; but this name came to them rather from their stations in the public places and at the crossroads, where they sat on their haunches like sphinxes, wrapped in the folds of their veils, motionless and, ordinarily, silent. However this may be, the sphinx, according to the remark of Panciroles, was the prostitutes' emblem.

As to the special nicknames of the courtezans, they are less ambiguous, since, to understand them, one had but to recall the circumstances which led to them. These nicknames were rarely flattering to those who bore them. Thus, the seductive Synope was not yet decrepit when she was called *Abydos* or the *Abyss*; Phanistrate, who had never had, according to Apollodorus of Byzantium, a very distinguished clientele, gradually sank to such a degree of filthiness that she was nicknamed *Phtheropyle*, because she was often seen seated in the street, in her off moments, occupied in destroying the vermin

which devoured her. These two dicteriiades, the one by her lice, the other by the none too engaging promises which her soubriquet held out, had won for themselves a popularity which brought many curious ones to see them, and which led Demosthenes to cite them in his tribunal oration. Antiphanes, Alexis, Callicrates and other writers did not disdain to speak also of the *Abyss* and of the *Lousy One*. These were two well-known types, at least at a distance, which completed a collection of hetairai of the vilest sort. In this collection figured the *Botcher*, the *Fisher Woman*, and the *Pullet*; this last one cackled like a pullet waiting for the cock; the *Fisher Woman* lay in wait for passers-by and fished for them with a hook, as it were; the third had neglected, so to speak, to mend the woof of her old amours. Antiphanes, who set down in his book the various characteristics of these dicteriiades, speaks also of the *Arcadian* and the *Gardener* whom we do not take to have been women. Athenaeus speaks also of the *Drunkard*, who was always full of wine, and who could never drink enough. Syneris had been nicknamed the *Lantern*, because she smelled of oil; Theoclea had been named the *Crow* because she was black; Callysto, her daughter, had been named the *Sow* because she was always squealing; Nico had been named the *Nanny-goat* because she had ruined a certain Thallus who loved her, as friskily as a nanny-goat munches the boughs of a olive tree; the *Water Clock*, whose true name is not known, had been so called for the reason that she gave each visitor only enough time to empty his clock of sand, a quarter of an hour according to certain commentators, an hour according to most of them. Eubulus had made a comedy on this subject, about this young woman who was so well acquainted with the value of time.

Athenaeus, who drew plentifully from a host of works which we no longer possess, describes by their nicknames many dicteriiades whose whole history is limited to these sometimes ambiguous soubriquets. He enumerates, with all the leisureliness of a scholar who has no fear of exhausting his material, the names furnished him by his authorities, Timocles, Menander, Polemon and all the Greek pornographers. There is Nourrice, the daughter of Nanno, who entertained her lovers in distinguished fashion; there were the *Aphies*, who were the two sisters, Anthis and Stragonion, remarkable for their blond complexion, their slender figures and their large eyes, which had won for them the name of fish (*aphue*); there was the *Cistern*, who fell one day into a vat of wine; "The world is coming to an end!" cried the hetaira

Glycera, celebrated for her bon mots; "look, the Cistern is in a vat!" Athenaeus and Lucian cite a number of hetairai of a lower order who were designated only by their nicknames: *Astra*, or the *Star*; *Cymbalium*, or the *Cymbal*; *Conallis*, or the *Bearded One*; *Cercope*, or the *Train-Bearer*; *Lyra*, or the *Lyre*; *Nikion*, or the *Patch*; *Iscave*, or the *Fig*; *Ischas*, or the *Bark*; *Lampyrus*, or the *Gleaming Moth*; *Lyia*, or the *Prey*; *Melissa*, or the *Bee*; *Neuris*, or the *Catgut*; *Demonasse*, or the *Woman of the People*; *Crocale*, or the *Beach*; *Dorcas*, or the *Hind*; *Crobyle*, or the *Hair-Buckle*, etc. A number of dieteriades had nicknames which explain themselves: the *Chimaera*, the *Gorgon*, etc.; others, such as *Doris*, *Euphrosyne*, *Myrtale*, *Lysidis*, *Evardis*, *Corinna*, etc., escaped the honor of a descriptive appellation.

But, ordinarily, the nickname was connected with an epigram more or less biting, more or less flattering, and better established than if it had been engraved on marble or on bronze; the epigram passed from mouth to mouth, and with it the nickname which it left as an indelible imprint on the girl who had merited it. Thus, the poet, Ammonides, found cause to lament over a certain dieterion lass: "If she should come to show herself naked, you would flee to the other side of the columns of Hercules"; and another poet added, "her father was the first one to flee." And so she was nicknamed *Antipatra*. A couple of others had the singular habit of defending themselves, preferring to be taken by assault, as if to conceal from themselves the shame of their traffic. Timocles was surprised to encounter resistance in a public woman, and so he nicknamed these the *Virgin* and the *Thrasher*; and he dedicated to them these verses: "Indeed, it is to elevate oneself to the rank of the gods to pass a night at the side of the *Virgin* or the *Thrasher*. What a firm white flesh! What a soft skin! What breath! What a charm in their resistance! They struggle against their vanquisher, and he is forced to ravish their favors; you are slapped in the face, struck by a charming hand. . . . How altogether charming!"



## CHAPTER VIII

THE true dicteriades of Athens were less dangerous to youth, and even to old age, than the subordinate hetairai, for nothing could equal the avariciousness of these sordid beings, who seemed to have no other occupation than that of ruining the inexperienced young and foolish old men. Solon evidently had wanted to place a restraint upon the rapacity of the supposedly respectable courtezans by creating the institution of courtesan-slave; he believed that he had done much for public morals by creating such an institution as this, which spared, at once, the time and the purse of citizens. But these dicteriades were poor captives, purchased outside of Greece and gathered from all countries; they had, frequently, not the least notion of Greek customs; they knew nothing of the city founded by Minerva, in which they practiced their shameful profession; they did not even speak the language of this city, to which they had been brought as foreign merchandise; their beauty and the more or less clever employment which they knew how to make of it was not a sufficient attraction for the Athenians, who, even in matters of pleasure, liked to have their minds satisfied, or at least equally excited, along with their physical senses. The hetairai of a lower class could not fail, therefore, to find at Athens more lovers, more habitués than did the slaves of the dicterions. These hetairai, coming, for the most part, from the people, and early depraved by the despicable counsels of their mothers or their nurses, were rarely as beautiful or as shapely as the dicteriades, but they had certain native mental resources, and even their perversity assumed piquant, ingenious, varying and diverting forms. And so, they found little difficulty in establishing, through their conversation, an ascendancy over the unfortunate and imprudent victims whom they had at first attracted and charmed by means of physical pleasure. They were feared and pointed out as living shoals, and the wisest pilots, the most clever oarsmen, the most solid ships ended by striking upon these reefs; these constant shipwrecks of honor, of virtue and of fortune, were the glory and the amusement of the deadly sirens who had caused them. "If anyone has ever let himself be caught in the net of an hetaira," says the poet Anaxilas in his comedy entitled *Neottis*, "let him name for me an animal that is quite so ferocious. What, by com-

parison, is an invulnerable dragon, a chimaera who breathes fire through her nostrils, a Charybdis, a Scylla, a seadog with three heads, a sphinx, a hydra, a lioness, a female viper? What are those winged harpies? No, it is not possible to equal the wickedness of that execrable brood, for it surpasses the worst that one could imagine." These hetairai, corrupted from infancy through the lessons given them by old and debauched women, preserved no human sentiment; when young, they pretended sometimes to be content with a single lover, so long as this lover could pay as much as twenty others; they afterwards abandoned themselves to as many as possible, and were only concerned with getting all they possibly could; they advised the unfortunate wretches who had no more money with which to pay them to commit theft, fraud, and, if necessary, murder; and the latter had no alternative to giving up their mistresses than not recoiling from any crime in order to keep them. Their victims included not only the sons of well-to-do families, the heirs to great names, young orators, poets and neophyte philosophers, but the hetairai of the Piraeus also took a pleasure in preying upon sailors, soldiers, country yokels and, above all, gamblers, who were more generous than the others, as well as merchants and the general run of dissolute customers. But the surprising thing is that these women, whose influence was so pernicious, and who enjoyed so much power and prestige, were possessed, often, of but a doubtful sort of beauty, and one that had been more or less effaced, having nothing left to offer but old and decrepit charms, grimacing smiles and insipid kisses. Anaxilas draws for us a sufficiently unattractive portrait of the principal monsters of the hetairism of his times: "There is that Plangon," he says, "a veritable Chimaera, who destroys strangers with iron and flame, whom, however, a solitary cavalier finally beat at her own game, by running away with all the furnishings of her house. As to Synope, is she not a second hydra? She is old and had for neighbor Gnathene with the hundred heads! But Nannion, in what manner is she different from Scylla with the three mouths? Is she not seeking to capture a third lover after she has already strangled two? But they say he saved himself by the might of his oars. As for Phryne, I cannot see in what manner she is different from Charybdis: has she not engulfed both the pilot and the bark? Theano, what is she but a hairless siren, with two eyes and the voice of a woman, but with the limbs of a black bird?" This passage from a Greek comedy, with which Athenaeus was familiar, initiates us into

the degradation of the trade of hetaira, and we see taking part in that trade, on an equality with the vilest dieteriades, the famous courtezans who had been, in their time, the most sought after, the richest, the most triumphant in Greece. Plangon, Synope, Gnathene, Phryne, Theano, become old women, were no different from the she-wolves and the sphinxes of the Ceramicus.

We find proof, in a hundred places, that decrepitude was not looked upon as an irreparable defect in women of an evil life, either because they possessed a marvelous art in disguising the traces of age, or because they commended themselves, for purposes of public debauchery, less by their exterior advantages than by the reputations they possessed for libidinous experience. Young or old, wrinkled or not, they made up their faces with a sort of rouge made from the flower of a thorny plant of Egypt or from the root of the acanthus; this vegetable rouge, diluted with vinegar, gave the yellowest skin the fresh hue of an infant; as to wrinkles, they took care to fill up those with fish-glue or with white lead, so expertly that the skin became smooth and polished, taking on the brilliant glow of youth, which was traced on it with a careful brush. The rouging of the face was, as it were, the stigma of Prostitution. "Do you pretend," writes Dryantides to his wife Chronion (in the *Letters* of Alciphron), "to place yourself on a level with those women of Athens, whose painted faces advertise their depraved manners? Rouge, the red and the white, in their hands vies with the art of the most excellent painters, so expert are they in giving themselves that hue which they believe best suited to their designs!" Inasmuch as the public hetairai did not show themselves close up except in the evening, by the light of a torch or lantern, and since by day they kept themselves at a distance, semi-veiled, before their door or their window, they found much profit in the singular brilliancy which cosmetics gave their skins. It was enough, moreover, that the effect was produced, and that the imprudent ones who followed their steps into the darkness of their retreat should have been inflamed at the first glance. The narrow cell into which the courtesan conducted her prey did not permit enough light to penetrate the shadows to cause disenchantment to follow the discovery of these mysteries of the toilet. When respectable women, undoubtedly in order to compete with the hetairai for their husbands' love, conceived the fatal ambition to imitate the coquettish artifices of their rivals, they made an awkward enough attempt, which often led to their con-

fusion. "Our women," says Eubulus in his comedy of the *Flower Girls*, "do not cover the skin with white, do not paint themselves with mulberry juice as you do; if you go out in summer time, one sees two rivulets of ink flowing from your eyes, and the sweat, falling on your neck, forms a furrow of rouge; as to your hair, dropped down over your forehead, it has all the whiteness of old age, on account of the white powder with which it is covered!"

If the employment of rouge was general among the lower-class hetairai, the manner of preparing and applying it afforded an infinite number of possibilities; it became, indeed, a true art. It is to be supposed that the novices had themselves painted before they learned how to apply the cosmetics with their own hands. As a matter of fact, in a land in which marble statues were painted in brilliant colors, it was only to be expected that human faces should display verity. We may believe that those artists called courtesan-painters (*pornographoi*), such as Pausanias, Aristides and Niophanes, cited by Athenaeus, did not limit themselves to making portraits of the hetairai and to depicting their erotic academies; they did not disdain also to paint, upon occasion, the face of a courtesan, even as they painted in the temples the statues of the gods and goddesses. According to the precepts of a Greek poet, beauty must vary unceasingly in order to be always beautiful, and so, there were continual variations of physiognomy to incite desire. When a courtesan had learned the art of painting herself, taste and habit completed her instruction in this art, in which each prided herself upon her excellence, although all did not succeed equally well. In the *Letters* of Alciphron, Thaïs writes to her friend, Thessala, on the subject of Megara: "She has spoken very insolently of the rouge which I use and with which I paint my face. And has she then forgotten the miserable state in which I have seen her, when she did not have even a mirror? If she knew that her own complexion is the color of sandarac, would she dare to speak of mine?" It is to be understood that, as all the hetairai were rouged, the oldest succeeded in reestablishing thus a sort of equality, reserving for themselves other advantages which the younger ones could acquire only by a long practice of their trade. That is why it often happened that a young and beautiful hetaira saw an old and ugly courtesan preferred to her, a preference which she could not explain, and which she attributed to magic philtres. In the *Dialogues* of Lucian, Thaïs is astonished that the Glycera's lover had left her for



Gorgon: "What charm has he found in those dead lips and pendulous cheeks?" says Thaïs. "Is it on account of her beautiful nose that he has taken her, or on account of her bald head and her great skinny neck?" In the same *Dialogues*, Tryphene jests at the old Philematium, who had been surnamed *Birdtrap*. "Have you remarked well her age and her wrinkles?" says Tryphene . . . "She swears that she is not more than twenty-two," replies Charmides. . . . "But do you believe her oaths rather than your own eyes? Do you not see that her hair is beginning to whiten about the temples? If you had ever seen her altogether naked!" . . . "She never permitted me that." . . . "And with reason, for she has a body as speckled as a leopard."

These old hetairai, when they were painted and adorned, would place themselves at a high window which opened on the street, with a sprig of myrtle between their fingers; and playing with this sprig as with a magician's rod, or chewing it between their lips, they would call to the passers-by. If one of the latter paused, the courtesan would make a well-known sign, joining her thumb and ring finger in such a manner as to represent with her half-closed hand a ring; in response to this signal, the man had but to raise the index finger of his right hand in the air, and at once the woman would disappear and come down to meet him. Then he would present himself at the door, and in the *atrium* he would find a servant maid who would conduct him in silence, a finger on her mouth, into a room which was lighted only by the door, when one drew the thick curtain which covered it. At the moment this new guest crossed the threshold, the servant would seize him by the arm and demand of him the sum fixed by the mistress of the place; he had to give it without bargaining, after which he might enter the room and the curtain would drop behind him. The courtesan, of whom he had caught but a glimpse by the light of day, would appear to him as a vision in the shadow of this cell, into which there filtered a feeble twilight through the portières. It made little difference, then, whether or not there was youth and beauty in this voluptuous darkness, a darkness that cast a kindly veil over bodily outlines, and which rendered meaningless everything which was not to be perceived by touch. Nevertheless, old age would come on and, by taking away their embonpoint and softening their flesh, would deprive the old courtesans of the happy privilege of passing for young; but they did not always forswear the benefits of their trade, since they then would devote themselves to the amorous education of the young hetairai,

and so still continue to live by Prostitution. They had also, at need, two industries sufficiently lucrative to which they might resort: they might make philtres for lovers or cosmetics for courtezans, and they might practice the office of a midwife. Phebiane, not yet old, writes to the old Anicetus, her lover: "One of my neighbor women, with child, has just sent for me, and I went there in haste, taking with me the instruments of the art of accouchement."

These midwives, these makers of philtres, were even more expert in the art of seducing and corrupting a young novice; the *Letters* of Alciphron and the *Dialogues* of Lucian are full of the gallant dialectic of these aged counsellors to debauchery. It is ordinarily the mother who prostitutes her own daughter, and who, after having tarnished the virginity of this innocent victim, sets about also to corrupt her soul. "It is not such a great evil," says the frightful Crobyle to her daughter, Corinna,\* "that you gave yourself last night to a rich and young Athenian; it is not so great an evil to cease to be a virgin, and to make the acquaintance of a man who gives you, on his first visit, a mina, with which I propose to buy you a necklace!" She thus rejoiced to see her daughter beginning the trade which was to lift them both out of want: "How am I going to do that?" naïvely replies Corinna. . . . "As you have just done," replies the vixen, "and as your neighbor does." . . . "But is she not a courtesan?" . . . "What does it matter? You shall become as rich as she; like her, you shall have a throng of admirers. You are weeping, Corinna? But see how many courtezans there are, what court they keep, how rich they are!" Then comes the mother's advice, the older woman holding up to her daughter the example of the flute-player, Lyra, Daphnis' daughter, the latter's taste in ornament, her attractive manners, her gayety, her caressing smile, which assured her of a steady income; if she consents to give herself, for a price agreed upon, at a festival, she does not become drunk, she handles her food with delicacy, she drinks without undue haste, she does not talk too much: "She has eyes only for him who has brought her there; it is he who had her love; when he takes her to couch, she is neither beside herself with joy nor unresponsive; she is concerned only with pleasure, and with completing her conquest. There is no one who does not praise her. Imitate her in all points, and

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. Aretino's Nanna and Pippa (*I Ragionamenti*, the section dealing with *The Art of the Courtesan*; see the English version by the present translator, *The Works of Aretino*, Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926.)

we shall be happy." The daughter is not too much frightened by these conditions which the mother imposes in order that she may become rich: "But," she says upon reflection, "all those who buy our favors, are they like Lucritus who bought mine yesterday?" . . . "No," replies Crobyle with gravity, "there are some who are handsomer, some who are older, some even who are uglier." . . . "And must I caress these; are they as good as the others?" . . . "They are the best of all, for they give more. The handsome lads are merely handsome. Think only of enriching yourself." Thereupon, the mother sends her away to the bath; for Lucritus is to come again that same evening.

Musarium's mother does not have to deal with an ignorant girl, who allows herself to be led with closed eyes, and who is experiencing her first amour; her daughter loves Chereas, who does not give her an obole and for whom she sells her jewels and her wardrobe; a courtesan who commits the folly of falling in love does not love by half measures. The old mother, indignant at this affair, which is a burden in place of being productive, is near to cursing a daughter whom she regards as being unworthy of her: "Go, blush!" she says to her, with anger and contempt. "You alone, of all courtesans, you appear without earrings, without a necklace, without a robe of Zarentum!" . . . "Alas! my mother," cries Musarium, stung to the quick in her woman's *amour-propre*, "are they happier or more beautiful than I?" . . . "They are wiser; they know their trade better; they do not believe the word of striplings, whose oaths are only on their lips. But you, a new Penelope, faithful lover of a single man, you will have no other than Chereas. Only recently, an Arcadian villager (he was young also!) offered you two minae, the price of the wine which his father had sent him to sell in the city, and did you not repel him with an insulting smile? You only love to sleep with this second Adonis of yours!" . . . "What? Leave Chereas for a rustic who exhales the odor of a goat! Chereas is an Apollo and that Arcadian is a Silenus." . . . "That is all right! He may have been a rustic, but Antiphon, Menecrates' son, who offered you a mina, is he not an elegant Athenian, young and charming as Chereas?" . . . "But Chereas has threatened me: 'I will kill you both if I find you together!' " . . . "Vain threat! Must you, then, renounce lovers and give up the life of a courtesan to take on the manners of a priestess of Ceres? Leave by-gones; here it is the Haloa; it is a festival day; what has he given

you?" . . . "My mother, he has nothing." . . . "He is the only one then who cannot find some means of getting around his father, of robbing him through some rogue of a slave, of demanding money from his mother, threatening, if she refuses, to embark on the first outgoing ship. But he is always there, beseeching us, an avaricious monster; he does not want to give or to permit others to give us anything!" Musarium will hear none of all this, and, despite her mother, she will continue to let herself be robbed by him until the time comes when she does not love him any more.

The courtezans of Greece were not often as disinterested as Musarium, and when they had lost time in loving, they soon made it up by levying contributions on those whom they did not love. One never entered their house except with purse in hand, and one almost never left with the purse. They had, also, different rates, and sometimes, out of repugnance or caprice, they would refuse to sell themselves at any price. It was not of the hetairai, but of the dicteriades that Xenarchos must have been speaking: "There are among them slender figures, squat ones, tall ones, short ones; young, old, middle-aged. One may choose from among them all and find pleasure in the arms of the one he finds most amiable, without any need of scaling walls or employing any artifice to come at them. It is they who make the advances to you, and who often contend for the honor of receiving you into their beds." The hetairai, even those who mingled with the sailors and the common people, sometimes employed their own free judgment, and even when they had no preferred lover, closed their ears and their doors to certain suitors. A simple slave girl, Salamine, whom Gebellus had taken out of the shop of a lame merchant, and whom he wished to make his concubine, resisted the advances of this gross person, who was hopelessly displeasing to her: "Punishment frightens me less than sharing your couch," she says to him. "I did not flee it last night. I had hidden myself in the garden where you went to search for me. Closed in a coffer, I disrobed myself for the horror of your embraces. Yes, rather than support them, I have resolved to hang myself. I do not fear death, and I do not fear to explain myself. Yes, Gebellus, I hate you. Enormous Colossus, you frighten me; you make me think of a monster. Your breath is poison to me; Go to perdition! I hope you find some old Helen of the hamlets, ugly, toothless and perfumed with greasy oil!" Alciphron does not tell us whether or not Salamine ended by growing accustomed to



Gebellus' monstrous figure. The merchants who thus sold the slaves whom they had reared and trained for love were known as *andropodocapeloi*; these slave girls, whose haunches had been compressed with knotted cords and bandalets, were noted for certain secret qualifications much sought after by Athenian libertines as a scandalous curiosity.

Many hetairai had begun as slaves; then some lover, taken with their charms or grateful for their services, had purchased them, or perhaps they had redeemed themselves with the gifts which had been made them. Most of them retained always the sordid and avaricious character of slaves; they would gradually increase the price of their favors as fortune favored them. After having learned their trade in a dicterion, where the rule of the house did not permit the receiving of more than an obole, they soon were asking one or two drachmas, once they were free; soon a stater of gold was not enough; a mina seemed to them a mere bagatelle, and they ended by demanding a talent, that is to say, eight thousand francs in our money,\* when they happened to be popular. This increase in price took place very rapidly, if they were beautiful, clever and cunning. But this prosperity did not last, if they were lacking in mind and prudence; in the latter case, they might be seen rapidly descending the ladder to the ranks of the unlettered hetairai, and they then had to be content with a few drachmas extorted from the parsimonious poverty of their unprepossessing customers. They might have been seen in the past promenading in magnificent litters, with slaves and eunuchs following, they might have been viewed laden with bracelets, earrings, rings and golden ornaments, freshly perfumed under their gauze and silk; they were to be seen, a short while afterward, covered with squalid rags, their hair in disorder, their arms emaciated, their necks wrinkled and pendulous, seated under a long portico of the Piraeus or wandering among the tombs of the Ceramicus. The insolence of these creatures when fortune favored them caused their humiliation in misfortune to stand out the more. All that was needed to bring about this sudden decline was a law suit, disease or a vice like drunkenness or gambling. No one wept for them in seeing them decay and sink into the depths of misery and abasement; for they had been merciless and heartless in the moment of their splendor. How many tears, how many ruined lives, how much despair had been their work! Despite their vices,

\*Translator's Note:—A talent in Attic silver was worth about \$1,446.

despite their infamy, they only too often inspired lasting passions!

The *Letters* of Alciphron are full of the complaints of unfortunate lovers, who have seen themselves deceived or been given their *congé*, and with the railleries of the cruel hetairai, who repel and torture them. Here is Simalion, ruined by Petala, and more enamored of her than ever; here is the fisherman Anchenius who, in order to possess his mistress, came near making her his wife. In Lucian's *Dialogues*, it is Myrtale who laughs at Dorian after having plucked him: "When I loaded you with gifts," the plaintive Dorian says to her, "I was your well beloved, your spouse, your master; I was all yours; but now that I no longer possess anything, and since you have made a conquest of the merchant of Bithynia, your door is closed to me. In front of that inexorable door, I burst into vain and solitary tears; but he, he is alone with you, all the night, drunken with caresses." . . . "What! You speak of loading me with gifts," replies the mocking Myrtale. "I have ruined you, you say? Let us count up and see what you have given me." . . . "Yes, let us count, Myrtale. In the first place, slippers of Sicyon: let us estimate them at two drachmas." . . . "You have slept two nights with me." . . . "Let us go on. On my return from Syria, I brought you a vase full of the perfume of Phoenicia which cost me, I swear it by Neptune, two drachmas." . . . "And as for me, I gave you on your departure a short tunic, which the sailor Epiurus had left at my house." . . . "But Epiurus recognized it and took it from me again, not without a fight, I call upon the gods to witness! In coming back from the Bosphorus, I brought you two Cyprian onions, five *saperdes*\* and eight perches; besides this, eight dry biscuits, a vase of Carian figs, and finally, ungrateful one that you are, I brought you from Patara gilded slippers. I also remember a fine Gythium cheese." . . . "That all comes to about five drachmas." . . . "Alas! Myrtale, it is all that I possessed! Unfortunate sailor that I was! Now, I preside over the right wing of the rowers and you despise me! Only a short time ago, at the solemn feast of Aphrodite, did I not lay down, and for your sake, a silver drachma at the feet of Venus? Have I not given two drachmas to your mother to buy you slippers? And to that friend of yours, Lyde, two or three oboles? All of this, rightly calculated, amounts to a seaman's fortune." But Myr-

\**Translator's Note*:—There is no precise equivalent for this word in English. *Saperdes* was the Pontic name for the fish known as *korakinos*, when salted. *Saperdis*, by distinction, is employed by Aristotle as the name of a fresh fish. The *korakinos* was found especially in the Nile.

tale merely laughed, as she counted with pride the rich presents which she had received from her merchant of Bithynia; a necklace; earrings; a rug; silver. And she turns her back on her other lover, saying: "What a lucky girl Dorian's sweetheart is! Oh! No doubt you will bring her Cyprian onions and Gythium cheese!" Petala, who also is looking for a merchant of Bithynia, and who has not yet found one, writes to Simalion, whose lachrymose and parsimonious advances greatly annoyed her: "Gold, tunics, jewels, slaves: those are what my profession and my position demand. My fathers did not leave me rich possessions at Nurinonte; I had no share in the product of the mines of Attica. The ungrateful tribute of pleasure, the all too light presents of love, which this host of silly and avaricious lovers bring me with groans, are all the wealth I have. I have lived for a year with you, consumed with boredom. Not even a perfume flows over my hair! These old and gross stuffs of Tarentum are all my attire. I do not dare appear before my companions. Shall I find the means of existence at your side? . . . You weep! It is too much. I need a lover who will provide for me. You weep! How ridiculous! In the name of Venus! He idolizes me, he says, and so I must give myself to him! He cannot live without me! What! You have no golden chalices? Can you not get money from your father, or the savings of your mother?" It happened only too often that a young man, blinded by his passions, yielded to these fatal suggestions and robbed his parents in order to satisfy the rapacity of an hetaira who did not love him, and who unfeelingly dismissed him as soon as she could get no more out of him. Anaxilis had reason to remark, in one of his comedies: Of all the ferocious beasts, there is none more dangerous than an hetaira.

However avaricious they may have been, the courtezans besieged the altars of the gods and goddesses with sacrifices and offerings; but what they asked of the divinities was not that they might encounter loving and devoted hearts, handsome and sprightly admirers; they were only concerned with lucre, and they hoped by bringing an offering to a temple that the god or goddess of that temple would send them, from Asia or from Africa, the *opima spolia* of a rich old man. Their generosity, even with regard to the masters of destiny, was therefore but speculation and a sort of usury. When they had done a good business and found a victim, they would go to thank the divinity to whom they believed they owed this good fortune; they did not

indulge in double-dealing with the gods or the priests, because they hoped they would soon be recompensed with fresh gains. Musarium's mother, irritated that her daughter does not exact payment from Chereas, cries ironically: "If we find one more such lover as Chereas, we shall have to sacrifice a she-goat to Venus Pandemos! A heifer to Venus Uranios! Another heifer to Venus of the Garden! We shall have to dedicate a crown to the goddess of riches!" The dietetion girl, Lysidis, wishing to make a praise-offering to Venus of the People, makes the goddess a singular one, reminiscent of those emblematic brooches offered by the courtesan Rhodopis in the temple of the Delphian Apollo: "O Venus! Lysidis offers you this golden spur which once belonged to a very beautiful foot. It has excited more than one proud mount, and yet, no matter how nimbly it spurred, no courser ever had a bloody flank from it; the proud animal reached the end of its course without any need of being spurred. And so she hangs this instrument up in the middle of your temple!" The learned commentators of the Greek *Anthology* are quite undecided on the subject of this spur, which, according to some, symbolized the prickings of pleasure and debauchery; according to others, it was the impatient request of a courtesan who had drained the purse of her clients; according to still others, it was an instrument of female libertinism which served the aberrations of a lewd imagination. At Corinth, the hetaira offered and dedicated herself to Venus, who thus enjoyed the fruit of this sacred Prostitution.

The courtesans were in greater number in Corinth than at Athens; hence the celebrated proverb which has come down to us through all antiquity, with a slight change of meaning: "*It is not permitted to all the world to go to Corinth.*" Different origins were assigned to this proverb, and all the suppositions bear some reference to the courtesans of this city, who were so renowned.\* Aristophanes, in his *Plutus*, explains the proverb by saying that "the women of Corinth repel the poor and receive the rich." Strabo is more explicit, telling how the merchants and the sailors who disembarked at Corinth during the festivals of Venus found so many enchantresses among the consecrated ones of the goddess that they ruined themselves utterly before they had set foot in the town. Strabo reproduces, elsewhere, the same pro-

\**Translator's Note*.—This renown has crept into the lexicons. Cf. the verb, *corinthiazomai*, which Liddell and Scott define as: "to practice whoredom because Corinth was famous for its courtesans." See Aristophanes' *Frogs*, 133.



verb, with a variation which justifies the sense of our commentators: "*One does not go with impunity to Corinth.*" Courtezans of all countries and of all ranks abounded in that opulent city, in which pupils of Prostitution were publicly instructed in the temples of Venus. The trade in debauchery was the most active and the most extensive of any in this vast and populous emporium of the universe. All, or almost all, the women practiced the art of venal love; each house was the equivalent of a dicterion. A courtesan, seated at her door, was looking one day at the arriving vessels and waiting for new victims; some one reproached her with her idleness, telling her that it would be better for her to be spinning wool and weaving cloth than to be sitting there with her arms crossed: "What do you mean by speaking of idleness?" she says. "It has not taken me very long to get all the cloth it takes to make the sails of three ships!" She meant by that, as Strabo remarks, that she had obliged three sea-captains to sell their vessels in order to pay her. The comic poet Eubulus had depicted in his piece, the *Cercopes*, a poor devil who gaily avowed that he had been plucked by fate: "I went through Corinth," he said, "and I ruined myself by eating a certain pea which is called *okimon* (courtesan or basil); I committed so many follies that I lost even my hood." The poet plays upon the double sense of the word *okimon*, which signifies at once courtesan and sweet basil, and which thus recalled, by a figurative allusion, the fact that this aromatic herb was regarded as the favorite plant of scorpions. When Dionysius, the Tyrant, driven out of Syracuse, took refuge, despised and wretched, at Corinth, he wished to shield himself against the contempt which he inspired in others and the misery into which he was sinking more and more; and so, he would pass whole days, according to Justinian's report, in the taverns and in the dicterions, living on *okimon* and defiling himself with all imaginable vices.

The lubricious and indefatigable Queens of Prostitution, far from being natives of Corinth, had been brought there at a very tender age by speculators or by matrons of pleasure; they came, for the most part, from Lesbos and the other islands of Asia Minor, Tenedos, Abydos, and Cyprus, as though to pay homage to the traditions which had Venus springing from the foam of the Aegean Sea. A great number were brought from Miletus and from Phoenicia, which furnished the most ardent ones. But the most voluptuous ones, the most expert at least in the art of pleasure, were the women of Lesbos, so much

so that in their honor a new Greek verb had been coined, *lesbiazein*, which signified not merely to make love, but to do so with art.\* The Phoenicians also enjoyed the privilege of endowing the Greek language with a verb which had much the same sense: *phoenipizein*, meaning to make love in the Phoenician manner. This was a praise which courtezans were ambitious to merit, whatever may have been their native country or that of their instructress. Miletus was, as it were, the nursery of dancers and flute-players, the auletrides who served at the festivals of Greece; but Lesbos and Phoenicia sent hetairai, which Corinth, an immense *gynæceum* where Prostitution kept its public school, received to her bosom. Homer, among the presents which Agamemnon offers to Achilles (Iliad, IX), complacently mentions "seven women, clever in fine works, seven Lesbians, whom he had chosen for himself, and who took from all the other women the prize of beauty." The *fine works* which were the product of the cleverness of these Lesbian women were not those of the chaste and industrious Penelope.

In addition to the mysterious labors of love which formed a large part of the early training of courtezans, their moral education, if one may employ such an expression in this connection, consisted of certain indecent precepts, applicable to certain conditions of hetairism, from the vilest dicterion girl to the greatest hetaira of the aristocracy. It was, undoubtedly, not Solon who had edited this courtesan's code. One finds, here and there, in the Greek erotics, the chief instructions which the courtezans handed on from one to another, and which might be classified as follows: 1. The art of inspiring love; 2. the art of increasing and holding it; 3. the art of getting as much money out of it as possible. "It is proper," says one of the cleverest of her trade, in the *Letters* of Aristenetus, "it is proper to put a few difficulties in the path of young lovers, and not to give them all they ask for. This artifice prevents satiety, keeps up the desire of a lover for a woman whom he loves, and renders her favors always new to him. But things must not be pushed too far, or the lover will tire, become irritated, and form other plans and other liaisons; love flies away with as light a wing as it comes." Aristenetus who, wholly a philosopher as he was, did not disdain to receive instruction from the courtezans, has formulated the same theory in another letter: "The pleasures which one hopes for,"

\*Translator's Note:—"To do like the Lesbian woman, Lat. *fellare*." (Liddell and Scott.) The verb occurs in Aristophanes.

he says, "depend on charms that cannot be put into words, charms which animate and vivaciously sustain desire. If one has attained them, this is no longer the case." Lucian, in his *Discourse on Those Who Serve the Great*, approves the tactics of the hetairai who refuse something to their lovers: "It is but rarely," he says, "that they permit a few kisses, for they know by experience that enjoyment is the tomb of love; they neglect nothing in order to prolong hope and desire." This, then, was the method by which the hetairai continued to excite, reanimate, develop and firmly imbed the love which they inspired. They were not less ingenious in provoking love, and the means which they employed to this end increased in refinement with the distinction of the man in the case, and with the elevation of the class to which the courtesan herself belonged.

An hetaira, even if she were not so well trained, had certain manners which she employed in attracting men; her looks, her smiles, her poses, her gestures were more or less attractive baits which she cast about her; each knew well enough what she must conceal or display; sometimes she would feign distraction and indifference, sometimes she was motionless and silent, sometimes she would run after her prey and seize it on the wing, in order not to lose it, sometimes she sought the crowd and sometimes solitude. Her snares changed, in form and aspect, according to the character of the game which she proposed to capture. They all possessed a provocative and licentious smile, which, from afar, awakened impure thoughts by appealing to the senses, and which, close up, showed teeth of shining ivory, lips of trembling coral, cheeks with capricious dimples, and a throat of quivering alabaster. This was the *cachynnus* which Saint Clement of Alexandria describes as the *courtezans' laugh*. The hetaira of superior position had fully as many means of seduction, more decent but none the less sure. She would send her slave or her servant maid to write with charcoal on the walls of the Ceramicus the name of the man whom she wished to captivate. Once she had been remarked by him, she would send him bouquets which she had worn, fruits which she had bitten into; she would let him know by a message that she was unable to sleep, or eat, or do anything but sigh. A man, however cold and austere he may be, is rarely insensible to a sentiment which he believes he has inspired. "She runs to embrace him when he comes," says Lucian in his *Toxaris*; "she stops him when he wants to go; she pretends that she only adorns herself for him, and she knows how to mingle, at the right moment,

tears, disdain and sighs with the attractions and the beauty of her bodily charms, her voice and her lyre." Such were the artifices which a well taught hetaira\* did not fail to make use of, and with a success that was almost certain. These coquettish and lying artifices came, ordinarily, from old women, ancient courtezans, who taught them to the novices whom they instructed.

The celebrated Neëra had been thus instructed by one named Nicarete, the freed woman of Charisius and the wife of Hippias, Charisius' cook. Nicarete bought seven little girls: Anita, Stratole, Aristoclea, Metanira, Phila, Isthmiade and Neëra. She was very clever at divining, from earliest infancy, those who were to be distinguished for their beauty; "she understood perfectly how to bring them up as she should," says Demosthenes in his plea against Neëra; "that was her profession and the one by which she lived." These seven slaves she called her daughters, in order to create the impression that they were free, and in order to get more silver out of those who wished to have relations with them; she sold the virginity of each one five or six times, and finally she sold the girls themselves. These slaves had been so well trained that they were not slow in redeeming their purchase money, and they continued, for their own profit, the trade of courtesan. The favors of a free-born girl were paid for more dearly than those of a slave or freed woman. The price was still higher if the hetaira passed for a married woman, although adultery, under the law, was punishable by death. But this law was almost never enforced; the guilty one was given over merely to the discretion of the outraged spouse, who most often was content with giving her a thrashing. The debt was ordinarily paid for by a sum of silver, which the adulterer presented in the form of an indemnity and ransom, being forced to do this in order to escape a punishment as unpleasant as it was ridiculous, for if he did not redeem himself, the husband would leave him to the mercy of a slave, who would beat him cruelly, and who would fasten an enormous black radish on his behind. Such was, according to Athenæus, the punishment of the adulterer, a punishment of which the Orientals have preserved some trace in their torture at the stake. It happened sometimes that the fear of the black radish was taken advantage of to make certain dupes believe that they had incurred this chastisement by committing an adultery without knowing it.

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. Tennyson's *Lucretius*: "Girls, Hetairai, curious in their art."



Nothing was easier than to suppose an angry husband, after having "invented" a married woman caught in a flagrant dereliction: "Ah, Venus, adorable goddess," cries the poet Anaxilis, "how could one run the risk of throwing himself into their arms when he thinks of the law of Draco? How dare to imprint even a kiss on their lips?" It appeared, nevertheless, that, in despite of Draco's law, there were married women who, without the knowledge of their husbands, practiced the profession of *hetaira*. Megara, in a letter to her companion Bacchis, a letter which the rhetorician, Alciphron, did not have the modesty to destroy, asserts that Philumene, although newly married, took part in a festival of debauchery, where the most shameful excesses occurred: "She has found the secret means of coming here, by plunging her dear husband into the most profound sleep," with the aid of a philtre.

These soporific philtres, like the amorous philtres, were especially employed by the courtezans and debauchers who made love their single occupation. There were, as we have said, old women who sold or prepared these philtres. The preparation of the philtres was looked upon as a work of magic, and the old women who held the secret were generally supposed to have gotten it from the witches of Thessaly or of Phrygia. Theocritus and Lucian have revealed for us some of the mysterious ceremonies which accompanied the composition of a philtre, and Lucian more particularly tells us of the frequent use which was made of these philtres by courtezans, to render themselves either loved or hated. Abandoned by her lover, who prefers Gorgon, Thais attributes his infidelity to the philtres which Gorgon's mother knows how to prepare: "She knew," she says, "the secrets of all the enchantments of Thessaly; the moon descends at the sound of her voice; she has been seen flying through the air in the middle of the night." This was a charm which blinded the unfaithful wretch, hiding from him the wrinkles and the ugliness of the monster, whom he only loved as the result of magic. Melissa, in order to get back her lover Charinus, whom Synamiike has taken away from her, demands of Bacchis that she bring her a magician with the power to cause a woman who is detested to be loved and one who is loved to be hated: "I once knew, my dear," replies Bacchis, touched by her companion's grief, "a witch of Syria who would be just the one for this business of yours. She it was who, at the end of four months, reconciled me with Phantias; a magical charm brought him back to my feet after I had despaired of ever seeing him again." . . . "And what does she charge, this old

woman?" demands Melissa. "Do you remember?" . . . "Her art is not very costly, Melissa. One gives her a drachma and a loaf of bread; one adds seven oboles, some salt, perfumes, a torch and a chalice full of wine for her alone to empty. There must be, also, some object which comes from your lover, a cloak, his slipper, locks of hair or something of the sort!" . . . "One of his slippers is at my house now." . . . "This old woman suspends them all from a rod, purifies them with perfumed vapors, and sprinkles salt on the fire. She announces two names and then, drawing a ball from her bosom, she whirls it around and recites rapidly her enchantment, composed of a number of barbaric words which make you shudder." There were several species of philtres: those which produced love, those which produced hate, those which rendered men impotent and women sterile; those, finally, which caused death. The use of these philtres was more or less dangerous, for a number of them contained real poisons, and yet, the hetairai constantly had recourse to them in carrying out their designs or satisfying their passions. Aristotle tells us that a woman who had given a man a philtre and caused his death, being cited before the Areopagus, was not condemned for the reason that she had not intended to kill her lover but to reanimate a dead love: the intention expiated the homicide. If philtres were sold among the courtezans, so also were the antidotes which stopped their effects; thus, according to Dioscorides, the root of the cyclamen, pounded fine and made up into lozenges, was a sovereign remedy against the most redoubtable of philtres.

Did one wish to reduce a man to impotence, a woman to sterility, one poured for them wine in which one had strangled a gray mullet. Did one wish to bring back an unfaithful lover? One hardened a cake of unleavened flour, and one let this cake be consumed in a fire lighted with branches of thyme and laurel. In order to change love into hatred, one spied upon him or her who was to be affected, one observed the footprints of this person, and, without being perceived, one placed one's right foot in the print of the other's left, and vice versa, repeating all the while in a low tone: "I am walking on you, I am on top of you." The witch, as she whirled the magic ball around in an incantation, uttered these words: "As this bronze globe turns under the auspices of Venus, so may my lover come rolling over the threshold of my door!" Sometimes she tossed into the magic brazier a wax image to which she had attached the name of the man or woman whom she was

vowing to the ardors of love: "Just as I make this wax melt under the auspices of the god whom I invoke," the enchantress would murmur, "so may that frozen heart which I desire to inflame melt with love." There were certain solemn enchantments, accompanied by mysterious sacrifices and secret practices. But ordinarily, they were content with a beverage or an ointment, into the composition of which had entered certain herbs or certain narcotic drugs, refrigerant, spasmodic or aphrodisiac in their affect. "The use of the philtre is very dangerous," wrote Myrrhine to Nicippe, "sometimes even it is fatal to the one who takes it. But what difference does it make! Dyphilus must live to love me or die in loving Thessala." The courtezans, in their preoccupation with love, with fortune, with ambition or with vengeance, often consulted the Thessalian women in order to know the future, to learn the issue of an adventure which they had undertaken, or to penetrate the shadows of destiny. Glycera, in a letter to the poet Menander, speaks of a woman of Phrygia who "knows how to divine, by means of certain cords of rushes which she stretches during the night: by their movement, she is instructed in the will of the gods as clearly as though they had appeared to her in person." This magical operation had to be preceded by various purifications and sacrifices, in which one made use of male incense, of oblong lozenges of storax, of cakes made in the light of the moon, and of leaves of the wild purslain. Recourse was had to these charms in order to obtain news of an absent mistress or a distant lover. As to the philtres compounded for producing love, they were so powerful and so terrible that their moderate employment produced the fury of the Maenads and the Corybantes, while the abuse of these amorous excitants caused madness or death.

The hetairai, among themselves, knew jealousies, resentments and hatreds, which often led them to this species of vengeance. This was the case, for example, when one girl would take away a rich and handsome lover from another who possessed him; and in this feminine warfare, use was made of all the less honorable means in order to achieve a triumph of vanity or of avarice. These women thought only of enriching and of satisfying themselves at the expense of one another; they were perpetual rivals and often implacable enemies. When Gorgon, who pretended to be Glycera's friend, takes away the latter's lover, Thaïs consoles Glycera by saying: "That is a trick which we play often enough, we other courtezans." Then she concludes in these terms: "Gorgon shall pluck him, as you have plucked him, and as you

shall pluck another." The translation of Perrot d'Ablancourt is here more expressive than the Greek text of Lucian, which limits itself to saying: "You shall find another prey." Despite the wrong they did to one another, the hetairai remained, none the less, friends, or rather, they refrained by policy from embroiling themselves. There was among them a certain *esprit de corps*, a common interest which bound them together, and which brought them back even closer together after they had been at odds for a time. But they detested each other all the more at the bottom of their hearts, notwithstanding their smiles, their caresses and their mutual flatteries. On the other hand, when they did love each other, their love became a rage, and nothing was more frequent than Lesbian love between courtezans. This love, which Greece did not brand with any striking reprobation, did not have to fear either the chastisement of the law or the anathemas of religion. It was in the dicterions, it was among the cloistered hetairai, that this unnatural love (*anteros*) reigned with all its transports. A courtesan who possessed this taste against nature (*trithas*) inspired only horror in men, but she carefully concealed from them a vice which found only too much indulgence among her companions. To Sappho commonly were attributed the scandalous developments of Lesbian love, as well as the philosophic theories on which it was established, like a religion founded on a dogma. Sappho was punished for her contempt of men by the unrequited love which Phaon inspired in her; but the evil which Sappho had perpetrated, by her doctrines and by her example, spread among the Greeks, infected all classes of hetairai, and even penetrated to the *gynæceum* of virgins and venerable matrons.

We shall have no more to say than Lucian does on this delicate subject, and we shall make use of only the most restrained translation. The dialogue of Cleonarium and of Leëna is like a portrait from the life by one of those courtesan-painters of Athens: *Cleonarium*. Fine news, Leëna! They tell me you have become the lover of the rich Megilla, that you are together, and that. . . . I do not know what to say. You blush? Is it true then?—*Leëna*. It is true, I am ashamed to say. . . . It is a strange thing!—*Cleonarium*. Eh! How's that? In the name of Ceres! And what is our sex coming to? And what do you think you are doing? Where will this marriage lead you? Ah! . . . you are not my friend, if you keep this mystery from me.—*Leëna*. I love you as much as any other, but Megilla is truly like a man.—*Cleonarium*. I do not understand. Can it be she is an unnatural



woman? They say that Lesbos is full of those women who, refusing any relations with men, take the place of men with women.—*Leëna*. It is something like that.—*Cleonarium*. Tell me then, *Leëna*, how you have been led to listen to her passion, to share it, and to satisfy it?—*Leëna*. Megilla and Demonasse, the rich Corinthians, who share the same tastes, staged an orgy. I was taken there to sing and accompany myself on the lyre. The songs and the night grew longer; it was the hour for repose; they were drunken. Then, Megilla: ‘*Leëna*, it is time to sleep. Come lie here between us!’—*Cleonarium*. And you accepted? . . . And then?—*Leëna*. They first gave me masculine kisses, not only joining their lips to mine, but with open mouths. I felt myself extinguished in their arms; they caressed my bosom; Demonasse bit me when she kissed me. As for me, I did not know where all this was going to end. Finally, Megilla in great heat threw back her robe and pressed me to her, threatening me like an athlete, young, robust, and she . . . I was greatly moved. But she: ‘Tell me, *Leëna*, have you seen a more beautiful boy?’—‘A boy, Megilla? I see none here.’—‘Cease to look upon me as a woman; today I am called Megillas, and I have married Demonasse.’ I burst out laughing: ‘I did not know, my handsome Megillas,’ I said to her, ‘that you here were like Achilles among the virgins of Scyros. No doubt you have everything that a young hero needs, and Demonasse has found it out.’—‘That is about it, *Leëna*, and this sort of pleasure also has its charms.’—‘Are you then one of those hermaphrodites with a double organ?’ . . . (How simple I was, *Cleonarium*!)—‘No, I am altogether male.’—‘That puts me in mind of that story of a Bœotian flute-player: a woman of Thebes was changed into a man, and this man afterwards became a celebrated augur, named Tiresias. Has some such accident as this happened to you?’—‘Nothing of the sort, *Leëna*, I am just like you, but I feel in me all the unbridled passions and the burning desire of the man.’—‘Desire? . . . Is that all?’—‘Deign to give yourself to my transports, *Leëna*, and you shall see that my caresses are virile; I even have in me something of the male: deign to give yourself, and you shall see.’ She besought me for a long time, made me a present of a precious necklace and a transparent cloak. I gave myself to her transports, and she embraced me then like a man; she believed that she was such, as she kissed me, agitated and swooning under the stress of pleasure.—*Cleonarium*. And what, *Leëna*, were your sensations? Where? How?—*Leëna*. Do not ask me the rest. It is too disgraceful! . . . In Heaven’s name! I shall not reveal it.”

## CHAPTER IX

**A**MONG the courtezans whom we have quoted, after Lucian and Athenaeus, a number were flute-players; and as we have said, in enumerating the principal classes of women of pleasure among the Greeks, the flute-players formed a division apart in what we have called the college of courtezans. They possessed more or less obvious analogies with the dicteriades and the hetairai; but in general, they differed as much from the one class as from the other, for they were not attached to public houses, and they did not inevitably become the property of the first comer; on the one hand, one did not go to seek with them those distractions of the mind which were to be met with among most of the hetairai; then, if they grew rich by prostitution, they had, besides, a trade which provided them with a living. This trade was often lucrative enough. They did not accept, therefore, the designation of courtesan, although they did everything to justify it. In their eyes, the title of their profession was always an evidence of their freedom and of their independent existence. And so, they called themselves *flute-players*, and under this name they had no scruples in playing the courtesan, more than those who passed openly as such. We have seen that, under certain circumstances, the flute-players were connected with those abominations practiced by low women; we have heard, also, the advice which Musarium received from her mother; and so, we cannot doubt that these women were quite ready to satisfy the passions which they aroused, and which they sought to arouse, by the sound of their instruments and the sight of their dances; but nevertheless, an auletris was not, properly speaking, an hetaira. The latter, on the other hand, regarded herself as a good deal above an auletris, whom she considered a female mountebank, practicing a manual trade; the other, for her part, had little regard for the courtesan who could claim no other status than that of being the recipient of a part of the desires and the transports which the flute-player was proud of having aroused with her dancing and her instruments.

The flute was a favorite form of music with the Athenians; its inventors held a high place in the admiration of men; to the god Pan was commonly attributed the invention of the straw pipe, or simple flute; while that of the cross-flute was attributed to Midas, the king

of Phrygia, and that of the double flute to Marsyas. These different flutes had since been greatly perfected, and the art of drawing from them melodious sounds had been similarly developed. There were certain women who excelled above all in this art, which was looked upon as the most puissant auxiliary to pleasure. In vain did the ancient poets, who were, it may be, but disdained flute players, endeavor to filch the instrument of Marsyas from the beautiful hands of the auletrides, by inventing that ingenious fable in which they showed Pallas as indignant at the deformity inflicted on the human face by the act of playing a flute, and as proscribing the use of this instrument, which caused even nymphs to grimace. However this may be, the number of the auletrides increased, and their presence at the festivals became absolutely indispensable. It had been discovered, as a matter of fact, that after the flute players had puffed out their cheeks, contracted their lips, and momentarily disturbed the harmonious ensemble of their features, they were none the less charming when they had laid down their instruments and had stopped their concerts, in order to take a more or less active part in the festival itself. Moreover, most of these musicians had learned to respect their beauty and to play the double as well as the simple flute without altering, by ugly and strenuous movements, their voluptuous physiognomies. Poetry, then, took upon itself the task of restoring the reputation of the flute, and while a clever sculptor was representing in marble Minerva pursuing the satyr Marsyas, in order to punish him for having taken a flute which she had thrown down, the poets were interpreting the wrath of the chaste goddess by accusing the sounds of the flute of having put her wisdom to sleep and of having seduced the deity herself, soothingly, into the arms of pleasure.

The flutes resounded also at the solemn festivals of the gods, especially at that of Ceres, which would not have been complete if the auletrides had not played in it their customary rôle by fluting and dancing; but it was, rather, at the Bacchic festivals, in the coarse joyous reunions at table, that the marvelous instrument of Marsyas exercised its irresistible power. Each stage of the repast was announced by a different air which was proper to it: *Comos* for the first course, *Dicomos* for the second, *Tetracomos*, etc. If the guests appeared satisfied with the victuals and wine which had been served them, the air called *Hedicomos* expressed their satisfaction and bore witness to their good humor; if they wished to applaud, the triumphal air called *gingras*

mingled with their handclapping and imitated the boisterous sound of the latter. There was also an air, called the *Callinice*, which celebrated the high deeds of drinkers, and which inspired their drunken defiances. The double flute, which included the masculine, held in the right hand, and the feminine flute, held in the left, lent itself to all the *tours de force* of imitative harmony; it rendered faithfully, in its flats and sharps, the most untranslatable sounds, and, with them, the most fugitive of emotions. One then beheld the diners, electrified and quite overcome by this enervating music, forgetting the beakers in their hands, which were filled and filled again, as they lay back ecstatically on their couches, following with eyes and ears the rhythm of the song and the measure of the dance. Their drunkenness was thus prolonged for entire nights: "I well may say," wrote Lamia, "it is that prince who has shared your bed, it is he who spends the night listening to you play the flute! I would not have believed it myself!" These airs on the flute were sometimes accompanied by songs which were even more expressive; they were determined also by the dances and the pantomime, which ordinarily accompanied them and which exhibited the same variety. This pantomime, these dances, these voluptuous airs served as a prelude to scenes of pleasure in which the auletrides did not play the part of on-lookers.

In the early ages of Greece, the art of the flute was in honor among the young folk, who preferred it even to the art of the lyre; but when the Thebans and the other Bœotians, who were proverbially accused of natural stupidity, and whose intelligence was not, it is true, so highly developed as that of the Athenians—when these gross and heavy sons of Bœotia had surpassed as flute players all their compatriots, this instrument was abandoned to women and declared unworthy of free men, excepting in the provinces, where it still found clever performers. Manners had begun to be corrupt, and Asia, especially Phrygia and Ionia, were sending a multitude of auletrides to Athens, to Corinth, and into the principal towns of Greece. The Thebans preserved their superiority, or at least their reputation as players of the flute, to such a degree that, in the second century of the vulgar era, a statue of Hermes which had remained upright among the ruins of Thebes still bore this inscription, recorded by St. John Chrysostom: "Greece accords thee, O Thebes, superiority in the art of the flute. Thebes honors in thee, O Panomos, the mother of the art." But despite the instrumental science of Thebes, the Phrygian,



Ionian and Milesian flute-players knew no rivals. They not merely played the flute; they sang, they danced, they mimicked; they were beautiful, shapely and compliant. They were summoned when one had guests to entertain and divert; they rented themselves out, thus, for the evening or for the night; the conditions varied according to needs and circumstances, the price according to the merit and beauty of the musicians. Ordinarily, the flute-player demanded no wage except for her music and her dancing; she reserved the right of concluding other bargains during the supper. When this flute-player was a slave and had a patron or a mother who exploited her, she was put at auction at the end of the festivities and went to the couch of the highest bidder. Athenaeus tells us how a philosopher who prided himself on his austerity, upon supping one day in the company of young debauchees, disdainfully repulsed an auletris who had dropped at his feet, as though to put herself under the protection of his philosophy; but this foolish philosophy became more human when the mountebank began exhibiting her accomplishments and began dancing to the sound of the flutes; the philosopher forgot his white beard and ran up the bids in order to obtain this charming girl, who bore him no hard feeling; but she was not knocked down to him, whereupon he fell into a terrible wrath, asserting that his bids had not been considered and that the decision was void. But the auletris would not put herself on sale again, and the philosopher ended by coming to fisticuffs over the matter with his companions.

All the auletrides did not dance; all the dancers did not play the flute: "I have spoken above," says Aristagoras in his *Mammecythus*, "of the beautiful dancing courtezans (*orchastridai hetairai*); I shall say no more of them, leaving aside also the flute-players who, scarcely of marriageable age, enervate the most robust of men and make them pay well for it." These flute-players were familiar with certain methods of debauchery capable, as one poet put it, of exhausting Hercules himself and emaciating a Silenus. Those libertines who had experimented with the refinements of Asiatic lust could not surpass them; and at the end of the meal, when all their senses had been overexcited by the sound of the flutes, they were often seized with an excess of erotic fury and would hurl themselves upon one another with blows, until a fistic victory had decided to whom the flute-player was to belong: "To understand this," cries Antiphanes, the comic poet, "one must have been often at those repasts where each one pays his

share, and have received and given there a number of blows for the sake of some courtesan!" The more stubbornly one fought, the harder and more emphatic the blows became, the prouder grew the queen of the battle, and the better she recompensed her victor, to whose health all goblets were refilled and crowned with roses. The passion of the Athenians for the auletrides was carried to a high point, and, if one believes Theopompus in his *Philippics*, from one end of Greece to the other nothing but the sound of flutes and the blows of fists was to be heard. The auletrides, in general less interested than the hetairai and also more amorous, did not pride themselves on their ability to resist a gallant proposition: "Do not address yourself to the great hetairai for your pleasure; you will find it more readily among the great flute-players!" Such is the advice which Epicrates, in the *Anti-Laïs*, gives his fellow citizens. It is to be understood that respectable women never assisted at these orgies, and that the entrance of an auletris into the festival hall put the matrons to flight before they had so much as heard the sound of a flute.

These flute-players excited such transports with their libidinous music that the guests would shed their rings and necklaces to offer them to the players. The clever flutist did not have hands enough to receive all the gifts made her in the course of a repast during which her music had turned all heads. Theopompus, in a work now lost, on the thefts at Delphi, had transcribed an inscription that was to be read on a votive marble near the iron brooches of the courtesan Rhodopis: "Phaylles, tyrant of the Phocians, gave to Bromiade, a flute-player and a daughter of Diniade, a *carchesium* (a mounted cup in the form of a gondola) of silver and a *cyssibion* (a crown of ivy) of gold." At certain meals, all the vessels were of gold and silver, and each time the flute-player struck a more intoxicating note or the dancer accentuated her steps and gestures, there was a rain of flowers, of jewels and of money, which she would catch in mid-air with a prodigious dexterity. This species of courtesan grew rich more rapidly than all the others, and they amassed considerable property while they were the vogue.\* Polybius grows indignant over the fact that the most beautiful houses in Alexandria bore the names of Myrtium, of Mnesis, of Pothyne: "And yet," he says, "Mnesis and Pothyne were flute-players, while Myrtium was one of those public women condemned to infamy, and whom we call dicteriades!" Myrtium had

\**Translator's Note*:—It is interesting to compare the modern chorus-girl.

been the mistress of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, as had Mnesis and Pothyne. There was no age, no rank, no position safe against the prestige of these dancers and musicians. Athenaeus tells us of certain Arcadian ambassadors sent to King Antigonus, who received them with much regard, and who caused a splendid feast to be served them. These ambassadors were old men, venerable and austere; they sat at table, ate and drank, with a sombre and taciturn air. But suddenly, the Phrygian flutes give the signal for the dance; the dancers, enveloped in transparent veils, enter the hall, balancing themselves upon the great toe; then, their movement quickens; they uncover their heads, then their throats, and, successively, their entire bodies. They are entirely nude, with the exception of a pair of drawers which hides their loins; their dance becomes more and more lascivious and ardent. The ambassadors are greatly excited by this unaccustomed spectacle, and without respect for the king, who is fainting with laughter, hurl themselves upon the dancers, who had not expected such a welcome as this, but who submit to the duties of hospitality.

One sees, in the *Dialogues of Courtezans*, that the auletrides had tenderer hearts than their rivals in Prostitution. Lucian appears to take pleasure in depicting them, at least in their youth, as passionate and generous lovers, who demanded nothing of their sweethearts, and who often even ruined themselves for the latter's sake. It is Musarium who sells two Ionian necklaces in order to provide for Chereas, who promises to marry her; it is Myrtium, jealous of Pamphilus, who has made her a mother, who trembles to see this dear lover espousing the daughter of the pilot, Philon: "Ah, Pamphilus, you give me my life," she cries on learning that her suspicions had no foundation, "I should have hung myself in despair, if that marriage had taken place!" It is Philine, equally jealous, but with more reason, who takes vengeance on her unfaithful Dyphilus by doing everything which will inspire jealousy on his side: "What was this folly of yours yesterday?" demands Philine's mother. "What happened at that feast? Dyphilus came to find me straight away; he burst into tears and complained of his wrongs, saying you were drunk and that you had danced, despite his forbidding you to do so, that you gave a kiss to his companion, Lamprias, and that, perceiving the suffering he felt, you abandoned him for Lamprias, whom you enlaced in your arms; that, moreover, he was pining away, and that tonight again you refused to share his couch; that he wept, but that you, retiring upon a neighboring couch,

did not cease to make him desolate with your songs and your refusals." Philine justifies her conduct by the sorrow which she accuses Dyphilus of having caused her; he, during the feast, had appeared to prefer Thaïs, Lamprias' mistress: "He saw my feelings, my attitude warned him; and yet, he took Thaïs by the lobe of her ear, and, drawing her to him, imprinted a fiery kiss on her lips, from which it seemed he could not break away. I wept, he smiled. He spoke, low and long, to Thaïs, and, without doubt, of me. Thaïs looked at me and smiled also. Only the arrival of Lamprias put an end to their transports. And yet, so that he might have no reproach to make me, I took my place by his side during the meal. Thaïs rose and was the first to dance, affecting to uncover her leg, as if she were the only one who had a pretty leg. Lamprias kept silent, but Dyphilus, bursting into eulogies, did not stop praising the grace of all her movements, the time of all her steps, remarking that her foot was made for keeping time, that her leg was elegant, and a thousand other impertinences. One would have said that it was Sosandra of Calamis and not that Thaïs whom you know well enough, since you have seen her in the bath. She was on the point of being insulting, when she said: 'Why doesn't she dance in her turn, that one who is afraid of showing off her pock-marked spindle legs!' What would you have me tell you, my mother? I arose and I danced. The guests applauded. Dyphilus alone, leaning back nonchalantly till the end of my dance, kept his eyes fixed on the ceiling." Philine thus wished to annoy Dyphilus by pretending to prefer Lamprias, and she succeeded so well in driving her unfaithful lover to despair that her mother, expert courtesan that she was, thought it necessary to give her daughter this advice: "I will permit you to feel resentment, but not to commit an outrage. A lover whom one offends goes away and is angry. You have been too hard on him. Remember the proverb: The bow that is bent too far breaks."

If the auletrides had *amants de cœur*, they were also given to intimate and abandoned liaisons among themselves. It was this Lesbian love into which Leëna, still innocent, although she was a flute-player, had permitted herself to be inducted by Megilla and Demonasse, the Corinthian auletrides. We have already seen what sort of lessons these courtezans gave. We have every reason to believe that the dancers and musicians were less given to the love of men than to that of which they themselves bore all the burden. These women, early trained in the art of the voluptuary, readily fell into those excesses in which the



imagination entangles the senses. Their entire life was, as it were, a perpetual and lascivious wrestling-match, an assiduous *étude* in physical beauty; from having viewed their own nudity and compared it with that of their companions, they formed a taste for such nudity, and they created for themselves weird and ardent pleasures, without the aid of their lovers, who often left them cold and insensible. The mysterious passions which were thus inflamed in the auletrides, were violent, terrible, jealous, implacable. We must listen, in the *Dialogues* of Lucian, to the beautiful Charmide, who groans and laments because her mistress, Philematium, whom she has loved for seven years, and whom she has loaded with gifts, has left her and taken a man. Philematium is old and rouged, but it makes no difference; she knows how to excite a love which nothing can appease or replace. Charmide, in order to conquer this love which devours her, has endeavored to choose another mistress; she has given five drachmas to Tryphene to come share her bed, after a feast at which she has touched no food and emptied not a single goblet. But Tryphene is barely couched at her side when Charmide repels her, seeming to avoid contact with this new friend, who does not wish to be paid when she is not employed. "I have chosen you to revenge myself on Philematium!" Charmide finally confesses to her. . . . "By Venus," cries Tryphene, wounded in her low-woman's vanity, "I would not have accepted if I had known you were choosing me to take vengeance on another! And on Philematium! A monstrous imposter! Good-by, it is already the third hour of the night." . . . "Do not abandon me, my Tryphene; if what you say is true, if Philematium is only a decrepit and rouged old woman, . . . I can never again look her in the face." . . . "Ask your mother if she has gone to the bath with her? Your grandfather, if he were still living, would be able to tell you her age." . . . "If this is so, no more barriers between us. Take me in your arms, kiss me and let us give ourselves to Venus. Good-by forever, Philematium!"

These depraved manners were so common among the flute-players that many of them would often gather at a feast to which a man was not admitted, and there would commit debauchery under the auspices of Venus Peribasia. It was at these feasts, which were called *Calipyges*, it was in the midst of goblets of wine crowned with roses, it was in front of a charming tribunal of semi-nude women that the battle of beauty was renewed, like that which took place on the shores of the Alpheus in the time of Cypselus, seven centuries before the Christian

era. Cypselus, exiled from Corinth, built a city and peopled it with Parrhasians, inhabitants of Arcady; in this city, consecrated to Ceres of Eleusis, Cypselus established games or beauty-contests, in which all women were called upon to take part under the name of *chrysophores*. The first who won the victory was named *Herodice*. Since their foundation, these memorable contests had been repeated with much ado every five years, and the *chrysophores*, that is to say, the *gold-bearers*, in order, no doubt, to signify that beauty was not to be sold too dearly, would come in a crowd to submit themselves to the gaze of the judges, who had no little difficulty in preserving at once their impartiality and their *sangfroid*.<sup>\*</sup> There were no other public contests of the same sort in Greece, although beauty was honored and adored; but the courtezans took pleasure, in their secret gatherings, in reviving a gracious memory of this institution of Cypselus, and would set themselves up as both judges and contestants in these voluptuous contests, which took place behind closed doors. The auletrides, above all the hetairai, loved to view and judge themselves in this manner, this being merely a prelude to the mysteries which were most to their taste. Alciphron, altogether grave rhetorician that he is, has preserved for us the picture of one of these nocturnal festivals, at which the flute-players and the dancers dispute not merely the palm of beauty but also that of pleasure. The Abbé Richard, in his translation of the *Letters of Alciphron*, has given us only extracts of the famous letter of Megara to Bacchis; but Publicola Chaussard has been less timorous, although his translation, which we reproduce in part, does not quite come up to the daring of the Greek text. It is the auletris Megara who is writing to the hetaira Bacchis, giving the latter the details of a magnificent feast at which her friends, Thessala, Thryallis, Myrrhine, Philumene, Chrysis and Euxippe had assisted, partly as hetairai and partly as flute-players. "What a delicious repast! The mere telling of it should pique you with regret. What songs! What sallies! We emptied the beakers till sunrise. There were perfumes, crowns, wines the most exquisite, viands the most delicate. A shady laurel-wood was the festival-hall. Nothing was lacking except you.

"Soon a dispute arose, but this merely added to our pleasure. It grew out of the question as to whether Thryallis or Myrrhine was the richer in the sort of beauty which gave to Venus the name of Callipyge. Myrrhine let her girdle drop; her tunic was transparent; she turned

<sup>\*</sup>*Translator's Note*.—Cf. The contemporary bathing-beauty contest.

around, and one could believe that one was looking at lilies through crystal. She gave her loins a precipitous movement, and, looking backward, smiled down on that highly developed and voluptuous form which she was agitating. Then, as if Venus herself had received her homage, she began murmuring some sweet sound or other, which was still more moving. Thryallis, however, would not admit that she had been vanquished; she came forward and, without reserve: 'I do not fight behind a veil; I wish to appear here as in a gymnastic exercise; this combat admits of no disguise!' So saying, she let drop her tunic and, revealing her rival charms: 'Contemplate,' she said, 'O Myrrhine, the slope of these loins, the whiteness and the fine texture of this skin, and these rose leaves which the hand of Pleasure has, as it were, scattered over these gracious contours, which are without barren restraint and without exaggeration; in their rapid play, their pleasing convulsions, these spheres you see here do not tremble like those of Myrrhine: their movement resembles rather the gentle movement of the waves.' In this manner, she redoubled her lascivious undulations, with so much agility that a universal applause decreed to her the triumphal honors. They passed on, then, to other contests: they disputed of beauty, but none dared vie with the firm, well-proportioned and polished belly of Philumene, who was ignorant of the labors of Lucina. The night flowed on with its pleasures; we ended with imprecations against our lovers, and with a prayer to Venus, whom we conjured to procure us each day new admirers; for novelty is the spice of love. We were all drunken as we separated."

Megara says, in her letter, that the suppers of the hetairai created a great stir in the world, and that the young Greeks were very anxious to take part in these orgies, in which no other rôle than that of spectators was left them: but ordinarily, the most shameless courtezans did not desire that their secret debauches should be unveiled to the gaze of a man. Those who did not permit themselves to be seduced, at least through curiosity, into these scandalous and depraved excesses, were looked upon as ridiculous by their companions, and sometimes this remnant of modesty would give rise to the suspicion that they had certain infirmities to conceal. The flute-players found no suspicion attaching to themselves when they paraded nude in the practice of their trade; and so one could not attribute any other motive to their reserve in the matter of Lesbian love than a marked preference for the sentiments and pleasures of true love. This was the

cause of unsparing railleries. "Should you be chaste enough to love but a single man?" wrote Megara to the young and gentle Bacchis, who had not desired to appear at these suppers of the unnatural women. "Are you ambitious to achieve a reputation for rare manners, while we are looked upon, all of us, as courtezans who give themselves to every comer?" Megara was one of the most debauched auletrides of her time, as Bacchis was the wisest of hetairai: "Your manners, my dear," wrote the hetaira Glycera to the latter, "your manners and your conduct are too respectable for the state in which we live!" This respectability of manners was even more rare among the auletrides than among the hetairai, though both were given to concentrating their attention on a single love affair, masculine or feminine, which often ruined them, and which never made them rich. It did not often happen that the two species of love were to be encountered to the same degree in a single woman; but this queer state of the heart and senses was sometimes to be seen among the auletrides, who were more sensual and more passionate than the simple hetairai. Lucian, in one of his *Dialogues of Courtezans*, shows us how a flute-player might, at the same time, carry on two heterogeneous affairs, and die of love for a man, even while she was giving herself unscrupulously to the love of a woman.

Ioëssa, who has demanded no silver of Lysias, and who shows him no venal favors, finds herself suddenly abandoned by this lover to whom she has sacrificed the most advantageous chances. She who, happy in her disinterested affection, had lived with Lysias as chastely as Penelope, as she liked to boast, had lost, without knowing the reason, the affection of this young man, whom she had not led to deceive his father nor to rob his mother in accordance with the detestable habit which was only too common among courtezans. She weeps, she sighs, she endeavors to soften Lysias, who does not reply to her, and who looks at her askance: "Last night," she says to him, "when you were emptying the goblets with Thrason and Dyphilus, the flute-players, Cymbalium, and Pyrallis, my enemy, were called in. It made little difference to me that you kissed Cymbalium five times; in that you only sacrificed your self-esteem. But Pyrallis! I was surprised at all that went on between you; you called her attention to the goblet from which you were drinking, and, as you handed it to the slave to be refilled, you ordered him, in a low tone, to bear it when it had been replenished to Pyrallis. You were eating a fruit and, profiting by the



fact that Dyphilus, who was busy talking with Thrason, was not looking, you seized the opportunity to toss the fruit into Pyralis' lap, and she seized the gift, kissed it and hid it away as a trophy." Lysias turns and goes his way. Pythia, Ioëssa's companion and bosom friend, comes to console the latter and to mock her at the same time! "These men!" she cries disdainfully, "their pride grows with our unhappy passion!" Ioëssa is in despair; and then, Pythia addresses herself to Lysias and attempts to reconcile him; "This weeping Ioëssa whom you defend, Pythia," replies Lysias bitterly, "alas! she has betrayed me, and I have surprised her in bed with a young man." . . . "To begin with, is she not a courtesan?" replies Pythia, who finds the thing very simple. "But tell me, when did you surprise her?" . . . "Six days ago," the sighing Lysias tells her. "My father, who was not unaware of my passion for this virtuous girl, had locked me in the house, giving orders to the slave who watched the door not to open it unless ordered to do so. I, who could not make up my mind to pass the night afar from her, I called Drymon and made him stand against the wall where it was lowest, and I mounted on his shoulder and climbed over. I come to her house; the door is locked; it is midnight. I do not rap, but, undoing the door, (it is not the first time), I enter noiselessly. Every one is sleeping; I approach the wall on tip-toe and touch the bed. . . . 'Who is it?' murmurs Ioëssa. O Ceres, I am dying! . . . I hear a sigh that does not come from one person," continues Lysias. "I thought at first that she had slept with a slave girl, with Lyde. But it was quite otherwise, Pythia! My hand, seeking assurance, encountered the fine and tender skin of an adolescent, naked and exhaling of perfumes from his tonsured head. Oh! If only then my hand had held a sword, I . . . Why are you laughing, Pythia? Is it then so laughable? . . . 'Lysias,' cries Ioëssa, 'is this, then, the cause of your wrath? It was Pythia sleeping at my side!' . . . 'Why do you tell him, Ioëssa?' interrupts Pythia. . . . 'Why not tell him?' replies Ioëssa, and adds: 'Yes, my dear Lysias, it was Pythia! Lonesome for you, I had her come to me.' . . . 'You mean to tell me that shaved head was Pythia's?' objected the incredulous Lysias. 'In that case, your hair has grown prodigiously in six days.' . . . "She had it cut off after an illness," responds Ioëssa; "she lost her hair. What she wears is not hers. Why do you not have Pythia show you and be convinced? She was the stripling of whom Lysias was jealous!" "

The auletrides, in whom art and habit had singularly developed

the voluptuous instincts, were not possessed, like the hetairai, of ambition to achieve a fortune: they had no love for money except to spend it, and they gained it so easily with their flutes that they had no need to resort to disreputable methods. When they were performing their music and their dances, in the presence of guests at a feast, they would become animated by the applause and would experience the desires which they had communicated to their auditors; but once the fumes of wine had been dissipated, they returned, so to speak, to the possession of their own free judgment, and they often haughtily refused to put themselves up at auction like the courtezans. There were undoubtedly exceptions, but in such case, a flute-player estimated her wares as highly as the great hetairai. The note of Philumene to Criton informs us as to how high the rate which a fashionable flute-player placed upon her caresses might rise: "Why do you torment yourself and lose time in writing to me? I have need of fifty pieces of gold and not of your letters. If you love me, give them to me without delay. If the demon of avarice or the spirit of perversity possesses you, do not bore me uselessly. Good-by!" Petala, whose correspondence with her lover, Simalion, we have viewed, was quite as positive a young woman as her companion, Philumene, but at least, she had the right to be somewhat exigent, since Simalion did not even give her the price of a robe and perfumes. "And I should be content with this outfit," she wrote to him, "to pass the days and nights at your side, while another no doubt will be good enough to look after my needs! . . . You weep! Oh! That will not last. I must have, by all means, another lover who will take care of me better, for I do not want to die of hunger!" She envies the lot of a flute-player, Phylotis, whom the rich Meneclides loads with presents every day. "As for me, poor thing, I have for my lot not a lover but a weeper, who thinks he has done his duty by sending me a few flowers, undoubtedly to adorn the tomb to which a premature death will drive me, a death of which he will be the cause. He would have nothing to say, if he did not tell me how he had wept all the night!"

The flute-players, these dancers who were hired out for feasts and parties, were not possessed of a melancholy disposition, and tears were not at all to their taste, at least when they were not in love; when this happened, they merely became more devoted and more sensitive than virgins and wives. They always had a smile on their lips, and they urged the guests to gaiety, to forgetfulness of their sorrows, and

to oblivion of the future. For this was one of the qualifications for their trade. A joyous disposition contributed not less to their vogue than did their beauty and their talents; living in the midst of wine-cups, they received their inspiration from Bacchus, and they appeared sometimes to be following the lessons of the Menades. Hence, that proverbial *mot* which escapes a Greek poet: "One always finds Bacchus at Cytherea's gate." They were received with delight in the houses to which they were summoned, and their appearance was a signal for an ebullient enthusiasm. They were, however, sometimes mistreated; drinking-vases were hurled at their heads, when they became the cause of a dispute among the guests; they were exposed, also, to certain brutalities against which the law did not protect them, since they were slaves or foreign women. Cochlis meets Parthenis all in tears, mutilated by blows, her garments in shreds, her flute broken; and this was the sorrowful story which Parthenis told her: Gorgus had sent for her to come to the house of his mistress, Crocale; this latter had gone over to Gorgus, who was a rich farmer of Enos, giving Dinomacus, an Aeolian soldier, who was not able to pay as dearly as she demanded, his *congé*. Gorgus, a simple man, good and easy-going, who had desired for a long time to possess Crocale, had sent her two talents (about 12,000 francs)\*: which Dinomacus refused to take to the beauty. "They were at table, with the doors closed," Parthenis relates between her sighs. "I was playing the flute, the meal had advanced and I was playing an air in the Lydian mode. My farmer friend arose to dance, Crocale applauding him. Everything was delicious, when we were interrupted by a great noise and the sound of cries; the street door was forced open, and eight robust young fellows, among whom was Dinomacus, burst into the room. Suddenly everything was in disorder; Gorgus was beaten and trampled under foot. Crocale was fortunate enough, I do not know how, to save herself by fleeing to the house of her neighbor, Thespiade. Then Dinomacus turned to me: 'Go to the devil!' he said. His heavy hands fell on my cheeks and broke my flute." Gorgus went to make a complaint before the tribunals, but Parthenis, who was not a citizen, did not even obtain an idemnity for her flute.

We have already cited a number of the nicknames of auletrides, mingled with those of dicteriades and of hetairai; Sinope, or the *Abyss*, and Synoris, or the *Lantern*, were those of flute-players. These

\**Translator's Note*:—Nearly \$2,900.

flute-players had no less opportunity than the other courtezans to win honor or shame through a soubriquet. But in general, the nicknames which the public gave them were suggestive of praise rather than of sarcasm; and so, are we to conclude from this that the auletrides were more skilled than their rivals in the art of the voluptuary? Sysimbrión or the *Wild Thyme* exhaled, after she had done dancing, an odor which one would have said was that of an aromatic herb; Pyrallis, or the *Bird*, seemed to have wings when she danced; Parene, or the *Brilliant*, deserved this epithet above all when she was nude; Opora, or the *Autumn*, who had furnished the poet Alexis with the subject and the character for a comedy, bore no other fruits than those of love; Pagis, or the *Lime-Twig*, even surpassed her reputation and never let the unfortunates who had become limed in her snares fly away; Thalusa, or the *Flowering*, shone like a flower; Nicostrate, or the *Hair Dresser*, prided herself on being an hermaphrodite; Philematium, or the *String*, amused herself only in fishing for small fry; Sigæa, or the *Promontory*, was celebrated for the shipwrecks of the most substantial virtue which she had caused. Athenæus cites, also, many auletrides whose names remained graven in the memory of lovers: Erenis, Euclea, Graminea, Hieroclea, Ionia, Lopadion, Meconida, Theolyte, Thryallis, etc. The *Dialogues* of Lucian and the *Letters* of Alciphron have immortalized certain others; Plutarch himself has devoted a memoir to the ardent Phormesium, who died in the arms of her lover or, according to a more authentic version, on the bosom of a mistress. But biographical details are lacking for the greater number of these celebrities of music and the dance. We merely know that Nemeade had taken the name of the Nemean games because she there had played the flute in honor of Hercules; we know that Phylira had plied the trade of a simple hetaira before becoming an auletris; we know that the famous Simoethe inspired so much love in Alcibiades that he took her away from the Megarians and refused to give her back to them, a fact which was for Megara a public sorrow; we know that the young Antheia, who, to make use of the expressions of the poet who hymned her, was as fresh as the flower whose name she bore, had ceased very soon to sacrifice to Venus; we know that Nanno, the mistress of Mimnerme, had slain all her lovers; finally, there has been preserved, in the *Anthology*, a Greek epigram which affords us the description of a beauty contest in which the participants desired to preserve their anonymity. This epigram is like a cry of admiration from the judges who had given the



decision: "I have judged three pretty rumps. Letting me see, in the nude, their brilliant beauty, they took me for an umpire. One had apples of a dazzling whiteness and revealed little dimples, such as form in the cheeks of persons who smile, while the second, spreading her legs, revealed, on a skin as white as snow, colors more vermilion than those of roses. The third, putting on a tranquil air, excited over her delicate skin light undulations. If Paris, the judge of goddesses, had seen these pretty rumps, he would have no more eyes for what Juno, Minerva and Venus had to show him."

But of all the Greek auletrides, the most famous by far was Lamia, who was passionately loved by Demetrius, king of Macedonia (three hundred years before Christ). She was an Athenian and the daughter of a certain Cleanor, whom she had left at an early age to go play the flute in Egypt; she played it so well that King Ptolemy took her into his service and kept her there a long time. But following a naval combat in which Demetrius dispersed Ptolemy's fleet near the island of Cyprus, the ship on which Lamia was fell into the hands of the conqueror, who was taken with her at first sight, and who preferred her constantly thereafter to his youngest and most beautiful mistresses. Lamia was then more than forty years old, and as Plutarch affirms, she was no longer content with playing the flute; she practised openly the trade of courtesan. But from the day Demetrius honored her with his embraces, she repelled all the others: "Certainly, since that sacred night," she writes to her royal lover in an admirable letter, transcribed by Alciphron, "since that sacred night down to the present moment, I have done nothing which might render me unworthy of your kindness, even though you have given me unlimited freedom. But my conduct has been without reproach, and I have had no liaisons. I do not deal with you as do the hetairai; I do not deceive you in the least, my sovereign, as they do. No, in the name of Venus Artemis! Since that day, no one has made me any propositions, in writing or by word of mouth, for they fear you and respect you as the invincible one."

Lamia, as she says in her letter, had won by means of her flute this conqueror of cities. Demetrius had a number of mistresses who sought, one and the other, to supplant her in the King's favor; their beauty, their youth, their graces and their spirit were the arms which they employed; but these arms were of no avail against Lamia. The latter's age, with which they unceasingly reproached her in their

epigrams, was never visible to the eyes of Demetrius. The jealousy of Leëna, of Chrysis, of Antipyra and of Demo grew in proportion to the King's love for their rival. At a supper at which Lamia was playing the flute, Demetrius turned to Demo and ecstatically inquired: "And how are you?" . . . "Like an old woman," Demo sarcastically replies. Another time, Demetrius, who made no effort to conceal his preference for Lamia, says to Demo: "Do you see the fine flute she has sent me?" . . . "If you would spend the night with my mother," replied Demo bitterly, "my mother would show you a flute that is still more beautiful." Demetrius pretended not to hear. Lamia also forgave her rivals for the reason that she did not fear them, but she conceived, nevertheless, a lively resentment toward Leëna, who had done all she could to betray her.

Machon, who cites Athenaeus, adding fresh obscenities to those of the Greek poet, initiates us into some of the amorous secrets of this old flute-player; he states that Demetrius, in his mistress' bed, imagined that he still heard and was following with delight the rhythm which charmed him during supper: *Ait Demetrium ab incubante Lamia concinne suaviterque subagitatum fuisse*; but this Latin version lacks the spice of the Greek. He says further that, of all the perfumes which Asia knew how to extract from plants, none was so agreeable to Demetrius' nostrils as the foul emanations from Lamia's body (*cum pudendum manu confricuisset ac digitis contrectasset*). Lamia, in her amorous furies, would forget that her lover was a king, and would hold him, chained and breathless, under the sway of her gleaming teeth. It was rumored that this was the origin of the nickname of Lamia, which signifies a *grub*, a species of female evil spirit which was accused of sucking the blood of sleeping persons. Demetrius' ambassadors permitted themselves to allude to Lamia's love episodes when, laughingly replying to Lysimachus, who had drawn their attention to the wounds which he had received in a terrible struggle with a lion, they said: "Our master can also show you the bites which a still more redoubtable beast, a lamia, has imprinted on his neck!" But Demetrius continued to be carried away by his passion. On returning from a voyage, he ran to embrace his father and took him in his arms with so much effusion that the old man cried: "One would think you were embracing Lamia!" It was remarked, in short, that Demetrius was loved by his mistresses but that he loved only Lamia. One day, however, he seemed to prefer Leëna to her; but Lamia, throwing her arms

about his neck, drew him gently to the couch, murmuring in his ear: "That's well enough! You shall have Leëna, too, when you want her!" In erotic language, one of the most indecent mysteries of the trade of hetairai was called *heainan*, and Lamia, in pronouncing her rival's name, was merely speaking of a lascivious posture which was better suited to her than to Leëna. And so it was, Demetrius' love for this old enchantress came to know no bounds. Pleasantries about this affair abounded, without in the least diminishing its zest, and the king of Macedonia, while admitting that Lamia was no longer young, insisted that the goddess Venus was still older, without being any the less adored. Lysimachus, in his savage kingdom of Thrace, made mockery of the voluptuous manners of Demetrius' court, and of a king whom he would one day have to combat and dethrone: "That great monarch," he said, "does not fear either ghosts nor grub worms, seeing that he sleeps with Lamia." The epigram was reported to Demetrius, who replied: "Lysimachus' court is like a comic theatre; one sees there only persons with two-syllable names, such as Paris, Bithes and how many other buffoons." Lysimachus wanted the last word: "My comic theatre is more respectable than his tragic theatre; you do not see in it either a flute-player or a courtesan." . . . "My courtesan," replied Demetrius, "is more chaste than his Penelope!" And they became, from then on, irreconcilable enemies.

Lamia, in order thus to captivate the king of Macedonia, made profit of the day and night with marvelous art; at night, she forced her lover to admit that she had no equal; by day, she wrote him charming letters; she amused him with lively and witty replies; she inebriated him with the sound of her flute; above all, she flattered him: "Puis-sant King," she wrote to him, "you permit an hetaira to address letters to you, and you think it not unworthy of yourself to devote a few moments to my letters, for the reason that you have devoted yourself to my person! My sovereign, when, outside my house, I hear of or see you, adorned with a diadem, surrounded by guards, armies and ambassadors, then, in the name of Venus Aphrodite! then I tremble and am afraid; then I turn my glance away from you, as I turn it away from the sun in order not to be blinded; it is then that I recognize in you Demetrius, the conqueror of cities. How terrible and warlike is your look! I scarcely can believe my eyes, and I say to myself: O Lamia, is that truly the man whose bed you share?" Demetrius had overthrown the Greeks before Ephesus, and Lamia

celebrated this victory with her flute, by singing: "The lions of Greece have become foxes at Ephesus." Demetrius despised the Athenians whom he had conquered, and detested the Spartans whom he had subdued. "The execrable Lacedæmonians, for all they have the appearance of being true men," Lamia wrote to him, "never cease, in their deserts and on their Taygetus, to cast reproach upon our splendid feasts, and to set over against your urbanity Lycurgus' uncouthness." Lamia often had the happiest whims. One night, at a supper, there came talk of the judgment attributed to Bocchoris, King of Egypt; a young Egyptian, lacking the sum which an hetaira named Thonis had demanded of him, invoked the gods, who sent him in a dream what the beautiful girl had refused him in reality; Thonis learned of this and claimed her wages. Then came a suit before the tribunal of Bocchoris. The King heard both sides, and then ordered the young man to count out the sum which Thonis demanded, to place it in a vase, and to pass the vase under the courtesan's eyes, in order to prove to her that imagination was a shadow of the truth. "What do you think, Lamia, of this judgment?" says Demetrius. . . . "I find it unjust," at once replies Lamia, "for the shadow of that silver did not assuage Thonis' desire, while the dream did satisfy her lover's passion."

Demetrius paid like a king; when he was master of Athens, he demanded of the Athenians the sum of two hundred and fifty talents (near two million francs in our money),\* and he caused this tax to be levied with a singular severity, as though he had need of the amount on the spot. And then, when it had been gathered with great pain: "Let them give it to Lamia," he said, "to buy her soap!" The Athenians revenged themselves for this odious exaction by spreading a report that Lamia must have a very dirty body, since she required so much soap for her toilet. Lamia was already very rich, but she spent like a queen. She caused to be constructed superb edifices, among others the Poecile of Sicyon, of which the poet Polemon published a description. She gave for Demetrius feasts, the magnificence of which surpassed all that history has to tell of those of the kings of Babylon and Persia. There was one which cost fabulous sums, and which was likewise celebrated by Polemon. "I am sure," Lamia wrote to Demetrius, "that the feast which I am planning to give in your honor, in Therippudius' house, at the festival of Aphrodite, will attract atten-

\**Translator's Note*:—Approximately \$361,500.



tion not only in the city of Athens, but throughout the whole of Greece." Plutarch affirms that she levied contributions on all Demetrius' officers, under pretext of covering the cost of the banquet, but that she at the same time had herself reimbursed by the King and by the Athenians. Although an Athenian by birth, she spared neither the purses nor the self-respect of her fellow-citizens. When death had struck her down in the midst of her orgies, Demetrius wept for her, and the Athenians apotheosized her, erecting a temple to her under the name of Venus Lamia. Demetrius, indignant at such baseness, exclaimed that one would no longer see, in the lower regions, a single great-hearted Athenian. "No," remarked the cruel Demo, "he would be careful not to go there, from fear of meeting Lamia."

## CHAPTER X

“WE HAVE,” says Demosthenes, in his plea against Neëra, “we have courtezans (*hetairas*) for pleasure, concubines (*palladides*) for daily use, and wives to give us legitimate children and to grow old faithfully in the interior of the house.” This precious passage from the Greek orator initiates us into the whole system of Greek manners, which tolerated the use of concubines and courtezans at the very door of the conjugal sanctuary. The concubines, on the subject of whom we find very little information in the Greek writers, were slaves who had been bought or servants who were rented, and whose duty it was, at need, to serve and satisfy the senses of their masters; there was, in their case, neither love nor libertinism; it was a simple service, although of a more delicate nature than any other. And so it was, a legitimate wife did not deign to be offended, nor even to be astonished, at beholding, under her eyes and in her own house, servant-maids or slave girls committing an act of servitude or submission by abandoning themselves to her husband. She herself, reduced to a state of inferiority and obedience in marriage, was not concerned in meddling with things of this sort which did not concern her, since nothing could come of such alliances but bastards. The concubines constituted, thus, an essential part of the domestic domicile; they had a definite and, in a manner, an authorized rôle in the case of illness, accouchement or other disability on the part of the true wife. Their existence flowed along silently in the shadow of the domestic hearth, and they grew old ignored in the midst of manual labors, even though they had given sons to their masters, sons who possessed no family rights, it is true, and who were by their very birth disinherited of the title of citizen.

The courtezans formed a class absolutely apart from that of the concubines, filling, however, an analogous function in the economy of civil life; they were the instruments of pleasure for married men. Their employment had been sanctioned by custom, if not by law, and under the general term of courtesan was included, at once, all the species of *hetairai*, not excluding the *auletrides* and the *dicteriades*. Nevertheless, there was a distinction between the public woman, properly so-called (*pornai*) and the *hetairai*, of whom Anaxilas gives us, so to

speak, a definition, in his comedy, the *Monotropos*: "A young woman who speaks with restraint, according her favors to those who come to her with their needs of nature, has been named an hetaira, or good friend, on account of her hetairism or good friendship." The origin of the word hetaira is not doubtful, and one sees from many passages in Greek authors that this word, respectable enough at first, had ended by undergoing a vicious application. It is certain that, long before the progress of erotic hetairism, women and girls of free condition termed their intimate acquaintances and their best friends hetairai (*philas hetairas*). The word had been handed down from the time of Latona and Niobe, who loved each other like a pair of hetairai, according to the expression to be found in Greek mythology. It is true that, afterwards, Sappho in the same manner described her Lesbians: "I shall sing of beautiful things to my hetairai!" she says in her poems. The true sense of the word *hetaira* had commenced to be altered. It was still respectable enough for the poet Antiphanes to be able to say, in his *Hydra*: "This man had for neighbor a young girl. He had no sooner seen her than he became enamored of this fair citizen, who possessed neither tutor nor parent. She was, moreover, a girl who displayed the most respectable tendency, a true hetaira (*ontos hetaira*)." Athenaeus also speaks of those who are true hetairai, who are capable, he says, of giving a sincere friendship, and who, alone among all women, have received the name of friendship itself (*hetaireia*), or the very surname of Venus, whom the Athenians have entitled Hetaira." The word soon lost its first signification, and was left as exclusive property to the women who were, in effect, facile friends to all the world. There were, however, frequent errors in the application of the word, and grammarians thought to remedy this by modifying the accent, a theme on which the poet, Menander, plays in this fashion: "What you have created," he says, "is not a word proper to friends (*hetairon*), but to courtezans (*hetairon*)." One sees, at once, the path the word had traveled in losing its original and respectable sense, when one hears the poet Ephippus describing in these terms the caresses of the *good friends*: "She kisses him without closing her lips, but with a gaping mouth like the birds, and she makes him very gay."

These *good friends*, among whom we shall not classify the dicterides, the auletrides and the subordinate hetairai, or vagabond courtezans, occupied at Athens a place of honor at the great banquet of

Prostitution. They dominated and eclipsed the decent women. They had their customers and their flatterers; they exercised a permanent influence over political events, by influencing the men who associated with them; they were, as it were, the queens of Attic civilization. One might divide them in two distinct classes, which exhibited certain common characteristics: the *intimates* and the *philosophs*. These two classes, equally sought after, constituted the aristocracy of prostitutes. The "philosophs," from living in the society of scholars and men of letters, learned to imitate the jargon of the latter and to take delight in their pursuits; the "intimates," less well informed and less pedantic, also commended themselves by their minds and served equally to charm the eminent men whom they had attracted by their beauty or by their reputation. Each of these great hetairai kept her court and had her following of admirers, of poets, captains and artists; each had her friendships and her hatreds; each her own reputation and power. It was under Pericles, and through his example, that the Athenians became passionately fond of these sirens and magicians, who did much harm to manners and much good to letters and the arts. During this period of time, it might be said that there were no other women in Greece, since the virgins and the matrons kept themselves hidden away in the mysterious depths of the domestic gynæceum, while the hetairai filled the theatre and the public square. These hetairai were, for the most part, fallen female citizens, of cosmopolitan beauty and talents.

The preference which Athenians of distinction showed for these women over their legitimate wives is only too well understood when one compares the two classes, when one takes into account the disillusionment which accompanied, almost always, the intimate relations of a husband with his wife. That which constituted the prestige of an hetaira was the shame of a married woman. That which constituted the glory of the latter would have been a cause for ridicule in the former. The one represented pleasure, the other duty; the one belonged to the interior of the house and the other beyond its walls. Both kept within the narrow limits of their rôle, without any desire to encroach on the domain of the other. The old poet Simonides took pleasure in sketching the portrait of the good woman, whom he supposes to have come from the bee: "Happy the mortal who finds one for a wife!" he says. "In her heart alone, among all others, vice has no access; she assures her husband of a long and peaceful life, growing



old with him in the most touching accord; mother of a numerous family in which she delights, distinguished among other women to whom she is a glorious example, she is not to be seen wasting time in vain conversations. Modesty reigns in her remarks and appears to give a greater brilliancy to the graces which are hers and which she diffuses over all her occupations." Now, these occupations consisted of household tasks, needlework and all the functions of wife, mother, and nurse. Simonides enumerates nine other species of women whom he supposes to have been created out of the elements of the pig, the fox, the dog, the monkey, the mare, the cat and the ass; it was, according to this gross satiric poet, among these various species that one must look for the hetairai.

"The name of a decent woman," says Plutarch, "should be, like her person, shut up in the house." Thucydides had expressed the same idea a long time before: "The best woman is she of whom one speaks neither good nor evil." This maxim sums up the sort of life which the Athenian matron led. She did not leave the house; she appeared neither at the public games nor at theatrical performances; she did not show herself in the street unless veiled and decently clad, under pain of a fine of one thousand drachmas, imposed by magistrates called *gynækonomoï*, who posted up the sentence on the plane-tree of the Ceramicus. She indulged in no reading, she had no instruction, she spoke her own language badly and she understood nothing of the refinements of politeness, the variations of fashion, the most simple notions of philosophy. She inspired, thus, in her husband no feeling beyond cold or tender esteem. A husband who permitted himself to love his wife with transports and voluptuous pleasure would have been blamed by everybody, in accordance with the axiom formulated by Plutarch: "One cannot live with a respectable wife as though she were a wife and an hetaira at one and the same time." The empire of the married woman ended at the door of the house, where that of her husband commenced; she had, therefore, no right to follow him or to trouble him in his outside life; she was forced to ignore what passed outside her home. Under certain circumstances, by virtue of an ancient law which had fallen into desuetude, she might complain to the magistrates and demand a divorce, if the excesses of her husband had become unbearable. Thus, Hipparete, Alcibiades' chaste wife, to whom it was a great grief to see her libertine husband deserting her to frequent foreign women of an evil way of life, Hipparete

retired to her brother's house and claimed a divorce. Alcibiades took the thing gaily, and declared that his wife must lay before the archon her grounds for divorce; she came there and Alcibiades also, but in place of justifying himself, the latter carried away in his arms the weeping plaintiff, whom he carried back to the conjugal domicile. Ordinarily, the matrons did not weep, from fear of abdicating their dignity. The only privilege of which they were jealous was the legitimacy of their children, the offspring of legal marriage. Demosthenes besought the Areopagus to condemn the courtesan Neëra: "So that decent women might not be placed on the same level with the prostitute; so that women citizens, wisely reared by their parents and married according to law, might not be confounded with a foreign woman who, many times a day, gave herself to many men, in all the most infamous fashions according to the desire of each."

The hetairai possessed, then, certain incalculable advantages over married women; they did not appear except at a distance, it is true, at the religious ceremonies; they took no part in the sacrifices; they did not give birth to citizens; but how many sweet and proud compensations for the vanity of woman! They were objects of ornament at the solemn games, the warlike exercises, the theatric performances, they alone rode in chariots adorned like queens, brilliant in silk and gold, their breasts nude, their heads uncovered; they made up the audience of the élite at the sessions of the tribunal, at the oratorical contests, at the meetings of the Academy; it was they who applauded Phidias, Apelles, Praxiteles and Zeuxis, after having furnished them inimitable models. They inspired Euripides and Sophocles, Menander, Aristophanes and Eupolis by encouraging them to contend for the theatric palm. Under the most difficult circumstances, one was not afraid to be guided by their counsels; one repeated everywhere their bon mots; one feared their criticisms; one was avid for their praise. Despite their habitual manners, despite the scandal attaching to their trade, they paid tribute to fine actions, noble works, great characters, sublime talents. Their blame or their approbation was a recompense or a chastisement which was usually true and just. Their charming minds, cultivated and active, created about them an emulation of the beautiful and a quest of the good, spread lessons in taste, and perfected letters, science, and the arts by illuminating them with the fires of love. This was their strength, this their seduction. Admired and loved, they excited their admirers to render themselves

worthy of them. Undoubtedly, they were the cause of much debauchery, of much prodigality, of much madness; sometimes, they relaxed their manners, they degraded certain public virtues, they weakened characters and depraved souls; but at the same time, they gave an impetus to generous thoughts, to honorable acts of patriotism and of courage, to works of genius, and to glorious inventions in poetry and art.

Their influence was especially beneficent against an odious and despicable vice which, coming originally from Crete, had been propagated throughout all Greece and even in the depths of Asia. The author of the *Voyage d'Anacharsis* says with reason that the laws protected the courtezans in order to correct more scandalous excesses. These amicable liaisons of the young Greeks degenerated ordinarily, except at Sparta, into infamous debaucheries, which had become a matter of habit, and which unworthy philosophers were so base as to encourage. Solon had already founded his famous dicterion and taxed, to the amount of one obole, the public service which was to be had there, in order to provide the dissolute Athenians with a convenient distraction, and to bring a moral opposition into the shameful disorders of antiphysical love; but this opposition was far more active and powerful when the hetairai were charged with establishing it. The latter caused to blush those who approached them after having been defiled in an unclean relation frowned upon by nature; they employed all the artifices of coquetry in order to be preferred to the young boys who served as auxiliaries to the most abominable form of Prostitution; but they did not always possess the advantage over these effeminates of the hairless chins, flowing locks, polished nails and perfumed feet. There were certain incorrigible perversities, and the debauchees who were most enthusiastic in paying the hetairai homage reserved a portion of their sensual appetites for another cult. Opinion, unfortunately, did not come to aid the admonitions and the good example of the courtezans, who in vain sought to reprove the unclean practices which masculine indulgence tolerated. Every day, at Athens and at Corinth, the slave merchants brought handsome young boys who had no other merit than their figures and their physical beauty; the price of these slaves did not cause those of the hetairai to drop, but they were often purchased at a dear enough figure, to be given in the house the employment of concubines. Public decency and conjugal modesty did not wax indignant over this

abomination. As to the young citizens who, like Alcibiades, by their bodily graces and their seductive physiognomies, excited many ignoble passions, they were honored in place of being spit upon; they occupied first place at the games; they wore costumes of precious stuff which made them easily recognizable; they received as they passed the striking homage of public immorality. They were the rivals whom the hetairai constantly endeavored to dethrone or to obliterate. This was a triumph of corruption against which the hetairai protested unceasingly. When Alcibiades had himself painted with two faces, so to speak, nude and receiving the crown of the Olympic games, nude and again a conqueror upon the knees of the flute-player Nemea, the hetairai of Athens formed a league to obtain the exile of this Adonis, who was so prejudicial to their cause. They limited themselves, sometimes, to combating their adversaries with contempt and ridicule. In a *Dialogue* of Lucian, an auletris, Drose, is deprived of her lover, the young Clinias; it is Aristenetus, "the most infamous of philosophers," who has taken him away: "What!" cries Chelidonium, "that frowning and bristling face, that beard of a goat, whom one sees walking with a crowd of young fellows in the Poecile!" Drose tells him then that for three days Aristenetus, who is beside himself over this innocent, has been promising to elevate him to the gods, and has been making him read the obscene *Colloquies* of the ancient philosophers: "In a word," she says, "he is besieging the poor young man!" "Courage! We shall take him away," replies Chelidonium; "I am going to write on the walls of the Ceramicus: 'Aristinetus is the corrupter of Clinias.'"

The hetairai thus fled those philosophers who so corrupted the youth, but they sought after those who held to a philosophy less hostile to women. They made even more to do over poets and comic authors, for the reason that they shared, in a manner, in the success of the latter: "What would Menander be without Glycera?" writes this witty hetaira to the great Greek comic poet. "What other would serve you as I, who prepare your masks, hand you your costumes, who know how to appear at the proper time in the *proscenium*, to take the applause from whatever side it comes, and to determine it by a proper clapping of the hands?" The poets and comic authors were not rich, and they could only pay in verses the favors which were accorded them; but these verses at least added to the celebrity of the one who had inspired them, and she was like-



wise sure of escaping the sarcasms of the poet: "I beg you, my dear Menander," wrote the same Glycera, "to place among your favorite pieces the comedy in which you make me play the principal rôle, so that, if I do not accompany you to Egypt, it will still make me known at Ptolemy's court and teach that King the empire which I hold over my lover." This comedy bore the very name of Glycera. Other courtezans wished at least to have their name as the title of a comedy, and one sees Anaxilas, Eubulus and others lending themselves to their mistresses' caprices. As for the philosophers, who did not possess similar means of making these capricious beauties illustrious, and putting them in the mode, they were treated by the latter with less regard, and if the hetairai did not laugh at their noses, if they did not pull their beards, they did often turn their backs on them, especially when the wise men talked too much: "Shall we," wrote Thaïs to Euthydemus, "shall we who do not know what causes the formation of clouds or what are the properties of atoms, shall we appear to you beneath the sophists? Know, then, that I have wasted my time in learning the secrets of your philosophy, and that I have reasoned it out with perhaps as much knowledge as your master." It was, moreover, Aristotle at whom Thaïs dared make a face, accusing him of having feigned aversion to women: "Do you think," she says, "there is so much difference between a sophist and a courtesan? If there is, it is only in the means which they employ in persuading; the one and the other have the same object: to receive." She wanted to wager with Euthydemus that she would vanquish in one night that factitious austerity, and that she would force even Aristotle to be content with *ordinary pleasures*. The courtezans were always wrangling with the philosophers, with whom they would reconcile themselves only to become embroiled anew. Their great grief against philosophy appears to have been, above all, its indulgence toward or penchant for *extraordinary* amours.

If the philosophers lacked strength of soul to resist the attractions of the courtezans, one should not be astonished that the great men of Greece yielded equally to those seductions. Very few might be cited who remained masters of themselves in the presence of all these enchantments of beauty, grace, mind and education. Kings, also, laid their diadems at the feet of these charming conquerors, in the manner of Gyges, king of Lydia, who, weeping for a Lydian courtesan, whom he judged to be incomparable, caused to be erected to

her a pyramidal tomb, so lofty that one perceived it from all points of his states. Among the kings whom the Greek courtezans subjugated with the most adroitness, we have already cited the names of the Ptolemies of Egypt. Alexander the Great, who took with him on his expedition the Athenian Thaïs, appears to have left to his successors, along with his vast empire, a taste for Grecian hetairai and Ionian flute-players. Some of his favorites, cleverer or more fortunate than their fellows, succeeded in getting him to marry them. Thus, after the death of Alexander, Thaïs, whom he had almost apotheosized in the act of loving her, married one of his generals, Ptolemy, King of Egypt, who had by her three children. The hetairai, however, were not well adapted to furnishing a numerous progeny; the majority of them were sterile. History mentions, nevertheless, a number of illustrious men who had courtezans for mothers: Philetairus, king of Pergamos, was the son of Boa, a Paphlagonian flute-player; the Athenian general Timotheus, was the son of a courtesan of Thrace; the philosopher Bion was the son of an hetaira of Lacedaemonia, and the great Themistocles was the son of Abrotona, a dieteriade whose price was one obole.

## CHAPTER XI

THE origin and progress of hetairism must be attributed, above all, to the Greek courtezans entitled philosophs, for the reason that they followed the lessons of the philosophers and served the latter in their amours. The philosophic hetairai had, in a manner, placed Prostitution under the aegis of philosophy, and all those women who, from temperament, from cupidity or from idleness, abandoned themselves to a disorderly life, might find authorization in the example and performances of Sappho, of Aspasia, and of Leontium. There were, without doubt, many hetairai who distinguished themselves in the different schools of philosophy, but history has handed down to us but ten or twelve names, which are the only ones in more than three centuries to represent the dogmas and the cult of hetairism, if one may apply this word to the philosophic system of Prostitution. This system appears to us to have had four forms and four distinct phases, which we shall term *Lesbian*, *Socratic*, *Cynic* and lastly, *Epicurean*. It may be seen from these arbitrary definitions that Sappho, Socrates, Diogenes and Epicurus are the patrons, if not the authors, of those doctrines which the philosophic hetairai took it upon themselves to propagate in their erotic domains. Sappho preached the love of women; Socrates spiritual love; Diogenes a grossly physical love; Epicurus a voluptuous love. These were the four forms of love in the propagation of which the courtezans of philosophy shared, and which afterwards found proselytes in greater or lesser numbers among those intimate hetairai to whom belonged the supreme dictatorship of public pleasures.

The most ancient philosopher who has left a trace in the legend of the Greek courtezans is Megalostrate of Sparta, who was loved by the poet Alcman, and who philosophized, poetized and made love six hundred and seventy-four years before Christ. Her philosophy was purely amorous, and it is permissible to look upon her as the prelude to Epicureanism. Alcman, according to the testimony of Athenaeus, was the prince of erotic poets, and since he was also the most fiery pursuer of women, (*erga mulieres petulantissimum*, says the Latin version, which, however, does not say everything), we may understand how he was, also, the grossest eater which antiquity may

claim the honor of having produced. He spent at table his days and his nights, with Megalostrate couched at his side, and he sang unceasingly a hymn to love, which Megalostrate repeated in chorus with him. In an epigram of this poet, an epigram quoted by Plutarch, the joyous Alcman remarks, between two libations, that if he had been reared in Sarda, the native land of his ancestors, he would have become a poor priest of Cybele, deprived of his virile parts; whereas he was now superior to the kings of Lydia in his rôle of citizen of Lacedaemonia and lover of Megalostrate. After this fine philosophy, which did not prevent her dear Alcman from dying devoured by lice, there is a sort of lacuna in the erotic philosophy. Sappho of Mitylene invents Lesbian love and proclaims it superior to that with which women had been content up till then. Sappho had not always been of this mind, and she was not always of this mind yet. She had been married, at first, to a rich inhabitant of the isle of Andros, and she had by him a son whom she called Cleis, after the name of her mother; but becoming a widow, she became persuaded, by reason of her disordered sensual imagination, that each sex should concentrate upon itself and seek extinction in a sterile embrace. She was a poet, she was a philosopher; her discourses, her poetry, won her many followers, especially among the women, who listened only too attentively to her evil counsels. Although Plato graces her with the epithet of *beautiful*, and although Athenæus is persuaded of her beauty on the authority of Plato, it is more probable that Maximus of Tyre, who paints her for us as little and black, is in conformity with the more authentic tradition. Ovid depicts her in no other fashion, and the learned Madame Dacier fills in the portrait of this illustrious Lesbian by telling us that she had eyes extremely lively and brilliant. Moreover, Horace, by giving her the epithet of *mascula*, repeated by Ausonius in the same sense, conforms to a generally received opinion, which would have Sappho to have been an hermaphrodite, as the facts appeared to prove.

Undoubtedly, the poetess Sappho, born of a distinguished family of Lesbos, and possessing a respectable fortune, did not prostitute herself for money, but she did keep a school of Prostitution, in which the young girls of her *gynæceum* early learned to make an unnatural employment of their nascent charms. There has been a futile effort to gloss over the manners and the doctrine of Sappho; but the famous ode, which has come down to us among the fragments of her poetry,



is enough to prove to the most incredulous that, if Sappho was not an hermaphrodite, she was at least an unnatural woman. (*Diversis amoribus est diffamata*, says Lilio Gregorio Giraldi in one of his Dialogues, *adeo ut vulgo tribas vocaretur.*) This ode, this masterpiece of hysteric passion, depicts the burning fever, the ecstasy, the pains, the languors, the disorders and even the last crisis of that passion which is more delirious, more unbridled than all other loves. The name of the Lesbian woman to whom the Sapphic ode was addressed is unknown. The frigid Boileau-Despréaux has given us the movement and the color of this ode, with more warmth and art than is his current custom:

Hereux qui près de toi pour toi seule soupit,  
 Qui jouit de plaisir de t'entendre parler,  
 Qui te voit quelquefois doucement lui sourire!  
 Les dieux, dans leur bonheur, peuvent-ils l'égalér?

Je sens de veine en veine une subtile flamme  
 Courir par tout mon corps, sitôt que je te vois;  
 Et dans les doux transports ou s'égare mon âme,  
 Je ne saurais trouver de langue ni de voix.

Un nuage confus se répand sur ma vue,  
 Je n'entends plus, je tombe en de molles langueurs;  
 Et pâle, sans haleine, interdite, éperdue,  
 Un frison me saisit, je tombe, je me meurs!\*

There has been an inappropriate attempt to find a tribute to Phaon in the sentiments which Sappho expresses in this admirable

\**Translator's Note*:—A translation (of the French poem) is subjoined:

Happy, who by your side sighs but for you,  
 Who loves to hear you speak and loves to see  
 You smile on her! O gods, if this be true,  
 Can you know happiness so great as we?

I feel, from vein to vein, a subtle fire  
 Run through my body, when I see your face;  
 And as my soul drowns sweetly in desire,  
 My tongue and voice can find no speaking grace.

A confused cloud rests over all my sight;  
 I hear no more but, warm and languid, fall;  
 Breathless and pale, forbidden, under blight,  
 Trembling, I sink and, sinking, that is all.

piece, which so causes us to regret the loss of her other works; but from one end to the other, the ode is addressed to a person of the feminine sex. One is thus reduced to the necessity of leaving its object nameless amid the school of Sappho, which included as pupils or lovers Amyethene, Athys, Anaethoria, Thelesylle, Cydno, Eunica, Gongyle, Anagora, Mnaïs, Phyrine, Cyrna, Andromeda, Megara, etc. Whoever was the one who inspired the sublime ode for the preservation of which we are indebted to the rhetorician Longinus, this ode, which affords a description, so faithful and so true, of the Sapphic fever, was looked upon by medical science of antiquity as a diagnostic monument to this affection. The Abbé Barthélemy, in his *Voyage d'Anacharsis*, limits himself to saying that Sappho "loved her pupils to excess, because she was not able to love otherwise." Nature, as a matter of fact, had sketched in her the outlines of the masculine organ while developing that of her own sex. It was, they tell us, the incestuous love of her brother Charaxus, it was the rivalry with which she met on the part of an Egyptian courtesan named Rhodopis, it was, above all, the triumph of her rival which led Sappho to seek a new manner of loving. She lived, from then on, in the company of her Lesbians, oblivious to masculine protests, until Venus, to punish her, sent Phaon to her. She fell in love with him at once, and she never wholly succeeded in overcoming the contempt of this handsome and indifferent young man. Pliny relates that this legitimate love sprang from a singular source: Phaon had found in his path a root of the white eryngium at the moment Sappho happened to be going by. The old translator of Pliny explains in these terms this curious passage of the *Natural History*: "There are those who say that the root of the white eryngium (which is very rare) is shaped in the manner of the organs of a man or a woman; and it is held that if a man meets one made in the manner of his own member, he shall be well loved by women, and there is an opinion that it was this alone which induced the young Sappho to form a friendship for Phaon." This *friendship* was such that Sappho, driven to despair by Phaon's coldness, hurled herself into the sea, from the top of the rock of Leucadia, in order to extinguish the flame of love with her life. She had, unfortunately, instructed her pupils too well for them to renounce their first loves, and her philosophy, which was but the quintessence of Lesbian love, never ceased to have its initiates, particularly among the courtesans. Some among them, in

order to escape the pursuits of men whom they found amiable, also hurled themselves from the Leucadian Rock, in order to cure themselves of a passion which Sappho regarded as a shameful form of slavery.

The school of Sappho, fortunately for the human species, was never more than an exception, powerless to prevail against true love. The hetaira Leëna, the philosoph, who is not to be confounded with Demetrius' favorite, had not been perverted by the unnatural spirit of the Lesbians; she practiced, frankly and honorably, her trade of courtesan at Athens; she was the friend and mistress of Harmodius and of Aristogiton; she conspired with them against the tyrant Pisistratus and his son, Hippias, five hundred and fourteen years before the modern era. She was taken and put to the torture, and they endeavored to force her to name her accomplices and to reveal the secrets of the conspiracy; but she, in order to be sure of keeping this secret, bit off her tongue with her teeth and spit it into the faces of her executioners. There is a belief that she perished in these tortments. The Athenians, to honor her memory, erected a monument to her, a bronze lioness without a tongue, which was placed at the entrance to the temple in the citadel at Athens. This was not the only act of proud courage which the annals of the Greek courtesans have to offer. Another philosoph, Cleonice, an hetaira of Byzantium, became known for her beauty and for her various writings on morality. It was this reputation which won for her the preference of Pausanias, son of Cleombrotus, King of Sparta. This general demanded that the beautiful philosoph be sent to him in order to amuse him in the worries of war. Cleonice arrived at the camp by night, while Pausanias was asleep; she would not permit them to awake him; she merely caused the lamps about the sleeping general to be extinguished, advancing in the darkness toward the couch of the Prince, who, leaping up at the noise of an overturned lamp and believing himself in the presence of an assassin, seized his dagger and plunged it into her breast. After this fatal mischance, he saw again, each night, the ghost of Cleonice, who reproached him for his involuntary murder; he sought in vain to appease and win pardon from her; but she announced that he would only be delivered from this bloody apparition by returning to Sparta. He returned, but only to die of hunger in the temple of Minerva, where he had taken refuge to escape the vengeance of his fellow citizens, who accused him of treason (470 years before Christ).

The era of courtezans began in Greece at the time Cleonice united the seductions of love and the instructions of philosophy. Another philosoph of the same sort, Thargelia of Miletus, had been charged with a mission as difficult as it was delicate for Xerxes, King of Persia, who was planning the conquest of Greece; this hetaira, as remarkable for her mind and education as for her beauty and her graces, served as a political instrument to Xerxes; it was her duty to win for him the principal Greek cities, by inspiring love in the chiefs who defended them; she succeeded, as a matter of fact, in this first part of her gallant mission: she captivated, in succession, fourteen chiefs, who became her lovers without any desire to become the tributaries of the king of Persia. The latter, entering Greece by the passage of Thermopylae, was obliged to take by assault those cities the possession of which Thargelia believed she had assured. Thargelia had settled at Larissa, and the King of Thessaly had married her; she ceased to be an hetaira, but she remained a philosoph. This courtesan's exalted fate excited the ambition of another Milesian, who soon eclipsed her in the career of letters and in fortune. Aspasia, originally of Miletus, like Thargelia, after having been a dicterion girl at Megara, married Pericles, the illustrious head of the Athenian republic.

She came to Athens toward the middle of the fifth century before the modern era; she came there with a brilliant train of hetairai whom she had instructed, and whose operations she cleverly directed. These hetairai were not foreign slave girls wise only in the art of pleasure; they were young Greek maidens of free condition, reared in the lessons of that philosophy which their eloquent instructor professed, and initiated into all the mysteries of the most refined gallantry. Aspasia, also, had means of seducing which were always ready for all circumstances, and she exercised, through her pupils, an influence which she did not deign to wield through her own personal resources. She opened her school and there taught rhetoric; the most important citizens were her auditors and her admirers. Pericles, who was greatly taken with this philosoph, introduced her not only to generals, orators, poets, all the eminent men of the republic, but also to the wives and daughters of citizens, whom the love of rhetoric had rendered indulgent toward everything else. They went there "to hear her devise," says Plutarch, in the naïve translation of Jacques Amyot, the almoner of Charles IX and Bishop of Auxerre, "keeping a suite which was none too respectable, since she had in her house young lassies who made gain with their



bodies." It was in this manner that she succeeded in captivating Pericles, who loved her to the point of passion, and who was not indifferent to the ragoûts of debauchery which she prepared for him. Aspasia showed herself everywhere in public, at the theatre, at the tribunal, at the lyceum, on the promenade, as a queen surrounded by her court; she established for herself, thus, a royalty rarer and less heavy to bear than all the others; she alone gave tone to the fashions; she alone dictated laws to the Athenians, and even to the Athenian women, regarding everything which concerned their costumes, their language, their opinions and even their manners, for she had placed hetairism in honor, had added to it, so to speak, her own original touch. The young Greek women, despite their birth, proceeded to descend from the rank of citizens to that of courtesan and to proclaim themselves philosophers, after the example of Aspasia.

Pericles, before loving Aspasia, had loved Chrysilla, daughter of Teleus of Corinth; but this first love had interfered with his conjugal arrangements. From the moment he met Aspasia, he thought only of breaking his marriage in order to contract a new one with her. He induced his wife to consent to a divorce and, by remarrying, was able to introduce into his house the beautiful philosopher, who in the taverns was known as the *dictyion lass from Megara*. Pericles was very amorous, but he was not jealous; he permitted Aspasia to go on keeping the company of Socrates and Alcibiades, who had possessed her before him: "He never went to the Senate," reports Plutarch, "and he never came back from there without giving a kiss to his Aspasia." Commentators have not deigned to go into details concerning this daily kiss at departure and return but have been content with assuming that it was as tender as Pericles was capable of making it. Finally, Aspasia spent much time alone with Socrates or Alcibiades and did not devote herself solely to philosophy while waiting for Pericles. The conversation among our philosophers would turn upon erotic subjects, and one regrets to learn that this charming woman tolerated and even encouraged in her two friends the most repulsive conduct. Plato has preserved for us a fragment of dialogue between Socrates and Aspasia. "Socrates, I have read your heart," she says to him; "it is burning for the son of Dinomace and of Clinias. Listen to me, if you would that the handsome Alcibiades should return your affection, listen to my well-meant advice." . . . "Oh ravishing words!" cries Socrates, "oh transports! . . . A cold sweat runs over my body; my eyes are filled

with tears." . . . "Cease to sigh," she interrupts him, "become filled with a sacred enthusiasm; elevate your mind to the divine heights of poetry; and that enchanting art shall open to you the gates of the soul. Gentle poesy is the charm of the intelligence; the ear is a road to the heart, and the heart is a road to everything else." Socrates, becoming more and more affected, can only weep and hide his bald head between his hands: "Why do you weep, my dear Socrates? Will your heart always be troubled by the love which the eyes of that insensible young man dart forth like lightning? I promise to bend him for you!" . . . The complacent Aspasia did not appear to be too greatly annoyed by the successor whom Socrates wished to give her, she who had enjoyed the first fruits of that austere wisdom. "Venus took vengeance on him," says the elegiac poet *Hermesianax*, "by inflaming him for Aspasia; his profound mind was never more occupied than with the frivolous worries of love. He was always inventing new pretexts for going back to Aspasia, and he, who had unveiled the truth in the most tortuous of sophisms, was unable to find any way out of the labyrinth of his own heart."

Aspasia never manifested better her power over the mind of Pericles than when she led him to declare war on the Samians, then on the Megarians. In these two wars, she accompanied her husband and never left his house of *hetairai*. The war of Samos meant for her but the revival of an interesting memory of her native city; Aspasia did not want the Samians, who were then at war with the Milesians, to obtain possession of Miletus; she promised aid to her compatriots, and she kept her word with them. As to the war with Megara, the cause here was less honorable. Alcibiades, having heard of the charms of Simoethe, the courtesan of Megara, repaired to that city with a few young libertines and carried off Simoethe, stating that they were acting in behalf of Pericles. The Megarians indulged in reprisals and caused two *hetairai* to be carried off from Aspasia's house. The latter wept bitterly, and war was declared. This war with Megara was the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. Aspasia, by her own amiable presence and that of her daughters, kept up the courage of the captains of the army; during the siege of Samos, especially, the *hetairai* were indefatigable, and they received such enormous benefits that they thanked Venus by erecting to her a temple at the gates of this city, which had not been able to hold out for long against Pericles' army. This double war, which, however glorious it was, cost much blood

and silver, augmented the number of Aspasia's enemies and increased their bitterness. The respectable women, irritated at the preference shown to courtezans over them, were lively in their reproaches to Aspasia and her companions, for having debauched the men and done a wrong to legitimate love. Aspasia encounters Xenophon's wife, who shouts more shrilly than the others; the hetaira lays hold of the wife's arm and says to her smilingly: "If your neighbor's gold were better than your own, which would you love better, your own or his?" . . . "His," replied that fiery piece of virtue, blushing. . . . "If his habits and jewels were richer than yours," continued Aspasia, "would you love better his or your own?" . . . "His," was the unhesitating reply. . . . "But if her husband were better than yours, would you not love him better also?" Xenophon's wife did not reply, but wrapped herself in the folds of her veil.

Nevertheless, Aspasia's enemies redoubled their venom. The comic poets, paid or seduced, insulted her in the theater; they called her a new Omphale, a new Dejanira, by way of indicating the wrong which she had done to Pericles. Cratinus went so far as to treat her as a shameless concubine. It was then that Hermippus, one of these makers of comedies, accused her of atheism before the Areopagus, adding, says the Amyot's Plutarch, "that she served as a procuress to Pericles, receiving into her house the middle-class women of the city, with whom Pericles took his pleasure." The accusation took its course; Aspasia appeared before the Areopagus, and she would inevitably have been condemned to death if Pericles had not appeared in person to defend her; he took her in his arms and covered her with kisses, being able to find no words beyond his tears, but these tears proved to be a piece of eloquence which saved the accused. The same accusation involved his friends, the philosopher, Anaxagoras, and the sculptor, Phidias; but Pericles, despite Aspasia's tears, was unable to save them from a threatened exile. In losing by death the great man who had saved her, Aspasia did not remain faithful to his memory; she gave him as successor a gross grain merchant named Lysicles, whom she took the pains to polish up and perfume. She did not cease to profess rhetoric, philosophy and hetairism. She died towards the end of the fifth century before Christ. There was a belief on the part of the Pythagoreans that her soul had been that of Pythagoras, and that it passed from her beautiful body into that of the ugly cynic, Crates. Her name was known to the depths of Asia, and the mistress of Cyrus the

younger, governor of Asia Minor, desired to be named Aspasia also, in memory of the celebrated philosopher whom she endeavored to imitate. This second Aspasia, not less remarkable for her beauty and her mind, fell heir to the celebrity which went with her name and entered, by turn, the bed of two Kings of Persia, Artaxerxes and Darius. She was a Phocian, and before taking the surname Aspasia, had borne that of *Milto*, that is to say, vermillion, given her because of her brilliant coloring.

Seeing that Aspasia, by the grace of metempsychosis, had consented to become the cynical Crates, we are not so astonished at the preference which the philosopher Hipparchia accorded this cynic, who lived 350 years before Christ. She belonged to a good family of Athens; she was not ugly; she possessed much intelligence and education; but when she heard Crates discussing the mysteries of the cynic philosophy, she became amorous of him, and she did not fear to declare to her parents her intention of giving herself to him. They locked her up, but all she did was sigh for Crates. Her family went to the philosopher and besought him to bestir himself in curing her of her stubbornness, and he set about it in quite good faith. When he saw that his reasoning and his advice made not the least impression upon Hipparchia, he laid before her his poverty, he showed her his hunched back, he threw to the ground his staff, his wallet and his cloak: "There," he said to her, "is the man you are going to have and the worldly goods which you shall find with him. Think it over well; you cannot become my wife without leading the life which our sect prescribes." Hipparchia replied that she was ready for everything, that she had thought it all out. Crates did his thinking on the spot, and, in the presence of the crowd which had assembled, he celebrated his marriage in the Poecile. From that day on, Hipparchia attached herself to Crates, going everywhere with him, accompanying him even to the feasts, against the custom of married women, and making no scruple, in the words of Bayle, "of rendering him her conjugal duties in the middle of the street." For this was in accordance with the prescriptions of the cynic philosophy. St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, throws a doubt on this indecent circumstance by saying (and we shall make use here of the translation of the venerable Lamoignon, the preceptor of Monsieur, the brother of Louis XIII), "It is not to be believed that Diogenes nor those of his household, who have the reputation of doing everything in public, take a true pleasure in so doing, imitating as they do, under



the cloak of a cynic, the commotions of those who copulate, in order to impose thus on the eyes of the spectators." However this may be, the marriage of Crates and Hipparchia was immortalized by the *cynogamies* which the cynics of Athens celebrated in the same manner under the portico of the Poecile. Hipparchia was even more cynical than her Crates, and nothing could make her blush. One day, at a meal, she posed a sophism which the atheist, Theodorus, resolved by lifting up her petticoat, according to the rather daring expressions of which *Ménage* makes use in translating Diogenes Laërtius (*anesure d'autes Moimation*). Hipparchia did not budge, but let him do so. "What does that prove?" she said to him, seeing him stop quite short. It does not appear that the Diogenes philosophy enjoyed much prestige among the courtezans, for, as a Greek poet enigmatically puts it, "It did not make the price of perfumes drop." Hipparchia had, however, a number of pupils who followed her villainous example, and who would have caused even the dicteriades to blush. She composed a number of works of philosophy and of poetry, among others, letters, tragedies and a treatise on the hypotheses, which led a certain hetaira to remark: "Everything with her is an hypothesis, even love." There is, in Greek, a very free word-play which explains the etymology of *hypothesis* (*hypo*, under, and *thesis*, position). Hipparchia, as a courtesan, could have been popular only in the world of cynics, for the portrait which another philosopher has left of Diogenes' disciples, provides a picture that is unattractive enough of the women of this sect: "Are you not right," she says, "to laugh at those men who draw their vanity from the thickness of their beards, from their gnarled staffs and their cloaks of tatters, under which they conceal the most outrageous dirt and all the vermin that can lodge there? What would you say, moreover, of their nails, which resemble the claws of a wild beast?"

The Pythagoreans, at least, despite Socrates' precepts, were better clad and better bathed; and the hetairai who devoted themselves to these philosophers, and who lent them a devoted assistance, had nothing repulsive in their toilet and in addition to their preoccupation with philosophy, took the time to think of material things. These hetairai did not turn up their noses at luxury, especially the members of the sect of Epicurus. Before the latter's time, Stilpon, a philosopher of Megara, who lived in the middle of the fourth century before Christ, had introduced hetairai also into the sect of the Stoics, although this sect regarded virtue as the first good. Stilpon began by being a

debauchee, and he always kept something of this character, even while he was recommending to his disciples the bridling of their passions; the basis of his doctrine was apathy and immobility. His mistress, Nicarete, who is to be distinguished from a courtesan of the same name, the mother of the famous Neëra, protested against this doctrine and divided her time between mathematics and love. Born of honorable parents who had given her a fine education, she was passionately interested in the problems of geometry, and she would not refuse her favors to anyone who offered her an algebraic solution. Stilpon taught her only dialectic; she learned from others those great principles which are the end of mathematical studies; Stilpon was often in a drunken slumber; the others were only too wide awake. A philosophic sect with hetairai for its partisans never failed to succeed. If the mathematician, Nicarete, rendered numerous services to the stoics, Philenis and Leontium were not less useful to the Epicureans. Philenis, disciple and mistress of Epicurus, wrote a treatise on the crooked atoms. She was of Leucadia, but she never took the fatal leap, for she did not have to complain of the coldness of her lovers. She had the advantage of knowing Epicurus in his youth, whereas Leontium did not make the acquaintance of this philosopher until he was in his old age; he then loved her all the more, but she was often quite embarrassed at returning his love. "I triumph, my dear queen," he wrote her in response to one of her letters, "in that pleasure which I feel upon reading your epistle!" Diogenes Laërtius has, unfortunately, quoted only this epistolary beginning. As to the letters of Leontium, we have but a single one, addressed to her friend Lamia; but we may judge from this letter that the old Epicurus had more than one preferred rival. His suspicions and his jealousy were, then, but too well founded. Leontium admired the philosopher and abhorred the old man.

"I call to witness Venus!" she wrote to Lamia. "If Adonis himself could come back to earth, and if he were eighty years old, if he were crushed with the infirmities of age, eaten up by vermin, covered with a stinking and ugly fleece like my Epicurus, Adonis himself would be insupportable to me." Epicurus is jealous, and with reason, of one of his disciples, Timarcus, the young and handsome Cephisian, whom Leontium justly prefers to him. "It is Timarcus," she says, "who first initiated me into the mysteries of love; he dwelt in my neighborhood, and I believe it was he who had the first fruits of my favor. Since that time, he has not ceased to load me with gifts: robes, silver,

servants, slaves, jewels from foreign lands; he has been prodigal with me in everything." Epicurus is not less generous, but he is not any the more prepossessing, and he is a hundred times more jealous; for if Timarcus suffers without complaint the rivalry of his master, the latter cannot forgive him for being young, handsome and loved. Epicurus, then, charges his favorite disciples, Hermacus, Metrodorus and Polienus, to keep a watch on the two lovers and to prevent their coming together. "What are you trying to do, Epicurus?" says Leontium, who endeavors to appease him. "You betray yourself to ridicule; your jealousy will become the subject of public conversation and of jokes in the theatres; the sophists will write glosses on you." But the gray-beard will hear nothing of this; he demands that none but himself be loved: "The whole city of Athens, if it were peopled with Epicuruses or with men like him," cries Leontium, driven to her wits' end, "would not, I swear by Diana, be as much esteemed by me as the least part of Timarcus' body, even the end of his finger!" Leontium demands asylum of Lamia, as a shelter against Epicurus' fury and his tender transports.

She did not deny herself distractions in the meanwhile; she had, at the same time, another lover, the poet Hermesianax of Colophon, who composed in her honor a history of amorous poets, and who reserved for her the finest place in his book. But she was more preoccupied with philosophy than with poetry, and she was never more at home than in the delicious gardens of Epicurus, where she prostituted herself publicly with all the master's disciples, according her favors in the sight of all the world. It is Athenaeus who furnishes us with these philosophic details. It is uncertain, after all this, as to just how it was the painter, Theodorus, had set about portraying Leontium in the act of meditation: *Leontium Epicuri cogitantem*, says Pliny, who praises this celebrated likeness. Leontium did not limit herself to speaking on the doctrine of Epicurus; she wrote other works remarkable for the elegance of their style. The one which she published against the scholar Theophrastus was the admiration of Cicero, who regretted finding so much good Attic wit springing from a source so impure. It was rumored that the Epicurean doctrine had made her a mother, and that her daughter, Danaë, whom she attributed to Epicurus, was born under the plane-trees of this philosopher's garden. For despite his venerable age, Epicurus concealed under his white hairs all the ardors of a young heart. Diogenes Laërtius quotes the following letter

of his, comparable to Sappho's burning ode: "I am consuming myself; scarcely can I resist the fire which devours me; I await the moment at which you shall come to join me in a felicity worthy of the gods!" Unfortunately, this passionate epistle is not addressed to Leontium, but to Pitocles, one of the disciples of the father of Epicureanism. Notwithstanding Pitocles and Leontium, there has been an effort to make Epicurus out to have been the most chaste and virtuous of philosophers. Leontium undoubtedly survived him, and was still flourishing toward the middle of the third century before the modern era.

Her daughter, Danaë, did not die a courtesan; she had become the concubine of Sophron, the governor of Ephesus, without abandoning, on this account, the philosophy of her mother and father. Sophron loved her to distraction, and Laodicea, Sophron's wife, was not jealous of her; on the contrary, she became Danaë's friend and confidant; she confided to her one day that she had employed assassins to free them both, at one and the same time, of a husband and a lover. Danaë hastened to reveal this to Sophron, who barely had time to flee to Corinth. Laodicea, furious at seeing her victim escape her, revenged herself on Danaë and ordered her to be hurled from the top of a rock. Danaë, surveying the height from which she was to be flung, cried out: "Oh ye gods! It is with reason that men deny your existence. I am dying miserably for having wished to save the life of the man I love, and Laodicea, who wished to assassinate her husband, will go on living in honor."

Such were the principal philosophers among the Greek hetairai, who conferred a prestige on science, and who lent to Prostitution an intellectual attraction, providing, so to speak, a *raison d'être* for its manifestations; these women elevated themselves to the rank of masters of philosophy, by their words and by their style; their glory was shed over the innumerable tribe of courtesans who, though frequenting the poets and philosophers, did not all, by any means, become philosophers and poets themselves. Plato had Archeanassa of Colophon; Meneclides had Bacchis of Samos; Sophocles had Archippe; Antagoras had Bedion, etc.; but the hetairai, for the most part, were content to shine in their own profession, and did not seek to appropriate the genius of their lovers, as Prometheus had appropriated the sacred fire. And poets and philosophers vied with one another in singing the praises of these courtesans.



## CHAPTER XII

ALMOST all the great men of Greece, like Pericles, hitched their chariots to a courtesan's star; each orator, each poet had his intimate; but while the hetairai who gave themselves thus to letters and to eloquence had for motive nothing but the love of celebrity, they were frequently deceived in their expectations, and their lovers failed to celebrate them except in more ephemeral works, or works, at least, which have not come down to us. There remain, therefore, very few details regarding hetairai whom the illustrious names of their admirers would sufficiently commend to us, but who, perhaps, neglected to commend themselves by their own graces and their minds. It seems that the eminent men who did not blush to love them and to recline publicly at their feet were afraid of compromising themselves with posterity by making themselves the trumpets of Prostitution and of the vices which flow from it. It is possible, also, that the mistresses chosen by the masters of Greek literature could claim no other merit than the honor which this choice and their own physical beauty conferred upon them; things are different today, when men of mind prefer beautiful statues; among the Greeks, as we have already said, the woman was remarkable above all for perfection of form, and her harmonious body alone possessed more silent seductiveness than mind and heart would have been able to put into her voice and conversation. And so we are forced to conclude that these sweethearts of the poets, the orators, and the wise men, were nothing more than beautiful and voluptuous.

Plato, nevertheless, turns aside from philosophy to compose verses on the wrinkles of his Archeanassa, whom he loves none the less, however wrinkled she may be. This epigram, which is untranslatable in French, turns upon the consonantal analogy presented in Greek by the word *wrinkle* and the word *pyre* (in Latin, *rogum* and *ruga*): "Archeanassa, the Colophonian hetaira, is now with me, she who conceals beneath her wrinkles a vanquishing Love. Ah! unfortunate one, scorched by her flame in its first youth, you are long since the prey of the pyre!" To the poet Asclepiades are commonly attributed these verses, which bear Plato's name, and which Fontenelle has

disguised in a sort of gallant imitation, in which he is careful not to approach the original Greek:

L'aimable Archéanasse a mérité ma foi;  
 Elle a des rides, mais je vois  
 Une troupe d'amours se jouer dans ses rides.  
 Vous qui pûtes la voir avant que ses appas  
 Eussent du cours des ans reçu ces petits vides,  
 Ah! que ne souffrîtes-vous pas!\*

However, Plato's epigram, or Asclepiades', might be understood in a dozen and translated in a hundred different ways. We shall have less difficulty in understanding another epigram, the authorship of which is anonymous, and which was composed for another courtesan of Miletus, called Plango, in Greece, and Pamphile in Ionia. This Plango, whose beauty was without a rival, took away the lovers of her two friends, Philenis and Bacchis; then, satisfied with her double victory, she offers to Venus a whip and a bridle, with this allegoric inscription: "Plango has dedicated this whip and these gleaming reins and has placed them at the door of her academy, where one learns so well to mount horseback, after having vanquished with a single courser the warrior-maid Philenis, although the latter was already on the homeward lap. Amiable Venus, accord to thy suppliant the favor of seeing her victory becoming immortal." The poet, in these verses, compares the amorous race to the stadium where the chariot races took place; Plango makes such a clever use of whip and bridle that she reaches the goal before Philenis, who has passed, however, the fatal turn, and who thinks she is sure of winning; as to the courser whom Plango mounted in this memorable contest, it was perhaps the poet himself. If Plango won the prize in this race, she was less happy a little later; Lucian tells us that she found herself, one fine morning, robbed of her lover, who, from a horse, had become a squire and had turned the whip and bridle on his feminine rider: "A single

*\*Translator's Note:—The French may be freely rendered:*

For Archeanassa has deserved my faith:  
 Her wrinkles are the wraith  
 Of an amorous army: I can see Loves play  
 In every wrinkled trench; if only you  
 Could see her as she was another day,  
 You'd see that this is true!

cavalier has cost her her life," says Lucian, making allusion to the inscription on the offering to Venus. We may readily suppose that to this offering was joined a statuette representing the courtesan with the features of the goddess whom she invoked in her equestrian academy; for her name (*Plango*) remained attached to the dolls or wax images which were sold at the gates of the temples of Venus, chiefly at Troezen, where Venus was worshiped under the title of *Hippolytia*.

Plango was less celebrated for her equestrian manners than for her rivalry with Bacchis. This beautiful hetaira of Samos, gentlest and most respectable of courtesans, had for lover Procles of Colophon. This young man meets Plango and forgets Bacchis; but Plango, knowing who is her rival, does not care to listen, at first, to these amorous supplications, although Procles offers to sacrifice everything for her, even Bacchis. "You demand of me a proof of love?" he says, "I will give it to you, even though it cost me my life." . . . "Well, then! I demand Bacchis' necklace," replies Plango, laughingly. This necklace of pearls had no equal in the world; the queens of Asia had sent it to the courtesan, who wore it day and night. Procles, desperate, went away to find Bacchis and, weeping, confessed to the latter that he was dying of love, and that Plango, undoubtedly out of a spirit of derision, had left him no hope, at least not unless she had Bacchis' necklace in exchange for what he asked. Bacchis silently undid her necklace and placed it in Procles' hand; the latter, undecided and beside himself, for a moment was on the point of casting himself at the knees of his magnanimous mistress, but passion bore him away; he rose, trembling, and fled like a thief with the necklace: "I send you back your necklace," writes Plango to Bacchis, in admiration of the latter's generosity, "and tomorrow I shall send you back your lover." The two courtesans conceived a great respect for each other and became such friends that they ended by sharing lover and necklace. And when Procles was seen between his two mistresses, it was the custom to remark: "There is the necklace of the two friends!"

Let us come back to the mistresses of great men. Sophocles, the old man, had two of them, Archippe and Theoris. The latter was a priestess of the mysteries of Venus and Neptune; she was looked upon, also, as a witch, because she made philtres. She had repulsed the love of the famous Demosthenes in order to flatter the pride of Sophocles, who addressed this hymn to Venus: "O goddess, hear my prayer! Render Theoris insensible to the caresses of youth, which you favor;

shed your charms over my white hair; and cause Theoris to prefer an old man. The forces of an old man are exhausted, but his mind still conceives desires." Demosthenes, to avenge himself for the disdain of this beautiful priestess, accused her of having incited slaves to deceive their masters, and caused her to be condemned to death. Sophocles does not appear to have taken up the defense of the unfortunate Theoris. Perhaps he was already in love with Archippe, who sacrificed for him the young Smicrines: "She is a screech-owl," said Smicrines, "she delights in tombs." This tomb hid a treasure; Sophocles, who died at the age of a hundred, left, by will, all his property to the amiable screech-owl. The courtezans held no less sway over comedy than over tragedy. Aristophanes was Socrates' rival and harbored an unfortunate passion for that philosopher's mistress, whom he had nicknamed *Theodote*, that is to say, *Gift of God*. This divine hetaira had received lessons from Socrates, who called himself the *wise counsellor in love*; she was taken with that flat nose and bald head of his; she had besought Socrates to give her the humblest place among his lovers and disciples: "Give me, then, a philtre which I may make use of," she had said to him, sighing, "in order to draw you to me." . . . "But I truly do not wish," Socrates had replied, "to be drawn to you; I much prefer that you come to seek me." . . . "I shall come willingly, if you will consent to receive me." . . . "I will receive you, if there is no one near me whom I love more than you." She chose her time well and came when Socrates was alone. Socrates continued to give her excellent advice concerning the regulation of her conduct as a courtesan and how to hold her lovers a long time by rendering them always more passionate. In the meantime, she made an enemy of Aristophanes, when she refused to take him for one of her lovers. The redoubtable comic poet suspected Socrates of having warned the naïve Theodote against him, and in place of revenging himself on her, proceeded to compose his comedy, *The Clouds*, in which he attacks the philosopher. This comedy had for denouement the trial which caused Socrates to be condemned to drink the hemlock. Theodote wept for Aristophanes' glorious victim: "Your friends are your riches," Socrates had said to her, on the first visit which she had paid him; "they are the most precious and the rarest of all your riches!" But Theodote was never willing to bestow her friendship upon the enemy, the accuser, the hangman of Socrates.

The poet Menander, whose comedies were not satires like those of



Aristophanes, was better received by the courtezans. Lamia and Glycera disputed successively, the glory of possessing and holding him; the one, Demetrius' mistress, the other the mistress of Harpalus of Pergamus. Compendious dissertations have been written with the object of ascertaining whether or not Menander surpassed the two princes in the good graces of their favorites. "Menander is of the most amorous temperament," wrote Glycera to Bacchis, whom she feared to have for a rival, "whereas the most austere of men would scarcely be able to defend himself against Bacchis' charms. Do not accuse me, then of forming unjust suspicions, and forgive, my dear, the tribulations of love. I regard as the thing most important to my happiness the keeping of Menander as a lover, for if I come to break with him, if his tenderness merely should grow cold toward me, should I not be in constant fear of being betrayed upon the stage and of becoming a butt for the insulting remarks of Chremes and of Dypphilus?" Glycera truly loved Menander, and the latter was so taken with her that, in order not to be compelled to leave her, he refused the brilliant offers of the King of Egypt, Ptolemy, who sought in vain to attach the playwright to his person. "Far from you," wrote Menander to Glycera, "what pleasures should I find in life? Is there anything in the world that can flatter me more or make me happier than your friendship? Your charming character, the gayety of your spirit, prolong even into old age the delights of youth. Let us pass together the days that remain to us; let us grow old together, let us die together; let us not take with us when we die the regret which comes from the fancy that the one who survives could still enjoy any happiness. May the gods keep me from hoping for happiness of this sort!" Menander preferred Glycera's love to all the joys of ambition, to all the splendors of fortune; and so he sent to Ptolemy in his place the poet Philemon: "Philemon has no Glycera!" he writes, with tenderness. Glycera, touched by this proof of real affection, strives, nevertheless, to prevail upon Menander to accept the proposition of the King of Egypt; she did not wish to be any less generous than he, she followed him everywhere, she went to set up house with him in Alexandria; but she triumphed in her heart, and rejoiced at having won the day over Ptolemy: "I do not fear any more," she says, "the slight duration of a love that is based only upon passion: if attachments of this sort are violent, they are also easily broken; but when they are sustained by mutual trust, it seems that one may look upon them as indissoluble."

It is scarcely believable that it is a courtesan who is experiencing these delicate shades of feeling, and it is to be concluded that love was none the less lasting with an old courtesan than with a young vestal. Before loving Menander, Glycera had been royally supported by Harpalus, one of the rich officers of Alexander the Great; but in revenge, Lamia had left Menander to enter Demetrius' royal bed.

Menander had composed a comedy in honor of his Glycera, while the poet Eunicius celebrated his own Anthea in a piece to which he gave her name. Perecrates offered to Corianno a comedy named after the latter. Thalatta had also the glory of being put into a comedy, but the name of her poet has been more quickly forgotten than that of his work. The poet Antagoras, Antigonus' favorite, had no cause to repent having dedicated his muse to his mistress, the avid Bedion, who, as Simonides puts it, had begun as a siren and ended as a pirate. The orators were still more ardent than the poets over the hetairai, who got from them ordinarily no profit beyond the satisfaction of their vanity. Lagide, or the *Dark One*, in honor of whom the rhetorician Cephalus had composed a panegyric in gallant style, gave herself, in return for an harangue, to Lysias; Choride made a father of Aristophon, who was himself the son of the courtesan, Chloris. Phyla was the concubine of Hyperides, who had purchased her, and who gave to her the care of a house which he had at Eleusis, without ceasing to carry on relations with Myrrhine, Aristagora, Bacchis and even Phryne; yet Phyla was but a slave girl, born at Thebes. Myrrhine according her favors to Euthias to decide him to become the accuser of Phryne, whom she detested: "By Venus!" Bacchis, indignant at this odious bargaining, wrote to her, "may you never find another lover! May the sublime object of your love, may that infamous Euthias chain your life to his own!" The rhetoricians and moralists had no less of a penchant for hetairism. Isocrates relents from his austerity in favor of Lagiscium; Herpyllis, who had shown herself worthy, upon the testimony of Aristotle, of being a mother, had given him a son named Nicomachus; Nicarate, the slave of Cassius of Elis, owed her liberty to the rhetorician, Stephanus. When an hetaira had the habit of taking a rhetorician or a poet for one of her friends, it became a post which was never left vacant in her house, and, according to the bon mot of one of these amorous and witty ladies, if the fort was badly manned or badly defended, one doubled or tripled the garrison. The celebrated Neëra, whom Demosthenes accused of

impiety and adultery, before the tribunal of Thesmothetus, had for lovers, at one and the same time, Xeneclides, the actor Hipparchus, and the young Phrynion, nephew of the poet, Democharus, who, as an uncle, had enjoyed the same privileges. But this was not all; Phrynion had a friend named Stephanus; they made a bargain to share the nights of Neëra, who was not the sort to be frightened by such an arrangement as this, she who, supping with her two lovers in Chabrias' house, left their arms to prostitute herself with all the slaves in the house. It must be said, in her excuse, that this night she was drunken. Naïs, or Oia, nicknamed *Anticyra*, because she was accused of making her lovers drink the hellebore, also had a number of suitors at the same time, disguising them under different names; Archias was her master, Hymenæus her go-between, Nicostratus her doctor, Philonides her friend.

One of the most renowned among the hetairai of the poets or orators was, certainly, Bacchis, the mistress of the orator, Hyperides. She loved him so profoundly that she refused to know any other man after having made his acquaintance. She was a tender and melancholy soul, content with loving and being loved by one alone. She possessed neither jealousy with regard to her companions nor defiance with regard to their rights; incapable of committing evil or even of conceiving the idea of it, she did not suspect wickedness at the hands of others. When Phyrne was accused of impiety by Euthias, Bacchis besought Hyperides to come forward in behalf of her friend and did all she could to save her. The only reproach brought against her by the hetairai was that of spoiling the trade of courtesan and of possessing too much virtue.

When she died, in the prime of life, there was general regret. She was wept as a model of kindness, of gentleness and tender passion. "Never shall I forget Bacchis," wrote Hyperides after having lost her, "never! How noble and generous was her devotion! It ennobled the name of courtesan. We all should join together to erect a statue to her in the temple of Venus or the Graces! It would be to the courtesans' glory, for on all sides it is repeated that they are perfidious sirens, devouring monsters, mastered by a passion for gold, and doling out their love in accordance with fortune, hurling their admirers, in the end, into an abyss of misery." Bacchis had rejected the most magnificent gifts in order to remain faithful to Hyperides; she died poor, possessing nothing but her lover's cloak as the covering

for the miserable bed where she still sought the trace of his kisses.

"I shall not surprise any more her gentle looks," exclaimed the desolated lover between his sighs, "I shall not see again the voluptuous smile of that charming mouth; gone are the delights of those nights which she animated with a pleasure that was ever renewed! Her character, of an ineffable gentleness, was still at home on the breast of the most complete abandonment. What glances! What words! What siren's talk! What pure and intoxicating nectar in her kiss! Seduction reposed upon her lips! She united in herself alone the three Graces and Venus; she seemed circled by the goddess' own girdle. And yet, Hyperides had given Bacchis more than one rival; he had even abandoned her, for a moment, to attach himself to Phryne, whose life he had just saved; but Bacchis showed neither spite nor rancor; she remained none the less faithful to him; and if one asked her what she was doing alone while Hyperides was forgetting her in the arms of a horde of worthless mistresses, "I am waiting!" she would say with simplicity. The incident of the necklace had given her a reputation throughout all Greece, and she was never called anything but the *good* Bacchis. As to Plango, who, on the other hand, had not played an odious role in this adventure, she was pardoned for having interfered with Bacchis' amours, and was nicknamed Pasiphile, or the *Peacock*. The mordant Archilochus compares her, in his verses, to those fig trees which grow on rocks and in isolated places and whose bitter fruit serves only to nourish crows and birds of passage: "Thus," he says, "the favors of Pasiphile are only for strangers who pass and come no more." There was, it may be seen, a certain moral justice among the courtezans, who were subject to public opinion.

Bacchis was not the only hetaira who won esteem in her profession. Aristænetus and Lucian also cite Pithias, who, although an hetaira, preserved decent manners and, as they said, "never departed from beautiful and simple nature." Another, Theodote, who undoubtedly would not have deserved the same praise, afforded, still, an example of the most devoted tenderness; she had loved Alcibiades; when her lover had perished in the ambuscades of Pharnabazus, she received his remains piously, wrapped them in rich stuffs, and paid them funeral honors. One sees, thus, a courtesan going into mourning for Socrates' pupil. Alcibiades was not, however, a faithful lover, and it might be said that he looked upon it as a point of honor to be acquainted with all the courtezans of his age. One day, someone spoke,



in front of him and his pet, Axiochus, of Medontis of Abydos, whom he did not know; those present took turns praising her, which aroused his curiosity; he embarked that same evening with Axiochus, crossed the Hellespont, and went to pass the night between Medontis and the lad. Many hetairai were celebrated who have left us nothing more than their names; such were the four courtezans Scyonne, Lamia, Satyra and Nanion, who appeared in a chariot beside Themistocles, or who attached themselves, in accordance with another tradition, to the chariot in which this illustrious son of a dieterion girl lay couched in the costume of Hercules. They were afterwards called Themistocles' *quadrigae*. Lucian, Athenaeus and Plutarch name only Aeris, Agallis, Timandra, Thaumaron, Dexithea, Malthacea, and a few other celebrities of the same sort. As for Themistonoë, who practised her trade for more than a dozen lustra, she did not quit the amorous arena until she had lost her last tooth and her last lock of hair. This intrepid perseverance was recompensed with the following epigram in the *Anthology*: "Unhappy one, you may efface the color of your white locks, you will not efface the irreparable outrages of old age. In vain, you pour perfumes over you, you exhaust in vain the white lead and the rouge; but the mask does not hide you. That is a miracle inaccessible to your art, the changing of Hecuba into Helen."

The majority of the hetairai possessed, in default of mind and education, vivacity and the gift of repartee, being often extremely witty and cutting in their remarks. Nico, known as the *Nanny-Goat*, on account of her furies, was famous for her temperamental fits, which she termed hoof-blows. One day, Demophon, Sophocles' boy, demanded permission to assure himself that she was built like Venus Callipygos: "What do you care?" she said to him, disdainfully. "You want to give it to Sophocles?" But the most famous for her epigrams was Mania, who let fly so many sharp and stinging ones that she was called the *Bee*. The Greeks remarked, in allusion to her name, Mania: "She is a gentle folly!" Machon filled an entire book with her witty sayings; she was, moreover, very beautiful, and compared herself to one of the three Graces, adding that she had at her house something with which to make a fourth. She replied to a debauchee, who was bargaining for her favors: "I will open to you only my arms; for I know you; you would devour my capital." A coward, who had taken to flight in a combat, leaving his shield behind him, found himself opposite her at table: "What is the animal that runs the fastest?" he asked of her

while carving a rabbit. . . . "A fugitive," she replied. Then she went on to tell, without mentioning the name, how one of the guests present at the table had lost his buckler in the war. The one who knew himself to be the butt of these railleries blushed, rose and was about to leave. "That was said without any intention of wounding you," she added, laying a detaining hand on his arm. "I swear to Venus! If anyone has lost his buckler, it must be the foolish one who loaned it to you." On one occasion, Demetrius demanded of her permission to judge with his own eyes of those beauties which she held from Venus Callipygos, and which she might have shown to the shepherd Paris, had she been permitted to enter the contest with the three goddesses; she turned to him on the spot, with an enchanting grace, and proceeded to parody the two verses of Sophocles: "Look, superb son of Agamennon, on those objects for which you have always had so great an admiration!" She had two lovers at the same time, Leontius and Antenor, whom she had chosen from among the victors at the Olympic games, and whom she satisfied on one and the same night, without the one of them knowing anything about her affair with the other. Leontius reproached her with an injured air when he learned of what had happened. "I had a curiosity," she said to him, "to know what sort of wound two athletes, two Olympic victors, would be able to give me in a single night!"

### CHAPTER XIII

**A**MONG all the Greek hetairai who possessed their historians and their panegyrists, the most celebrated, for various reasons, were Gnathæne, Laïs, Phryne, Pythionice and Glycera.

The biography of Gnathæne is made up of bon mots, of repartee and sparkling epigrams, which the poet Machon put into verse and which Athenæus collected with a complacency which we regret not being able to imitate. The Greek language had certain licenses which lent themselves to all the audacities of which courtezans were guilty in their speech, whereas the French finds itself restrained from reproducing these sallies in a manner which is, at once, decent and intelligible. Gnathæne, who must have been an Athenian, to judge by the Attic flavor and the vivacity of her mind, lived in the time of Sophocles, at the end of the fifth century before Christ. She was, certainly, of a remarkable beauty; but the quality that was appreciated most in her was her always inexhaustible gayety, seasoned with remarks which were full of salt, and which, though sometimes gross and bitter, held no less charm for libertines. One paid to hear her as to see her, and the dinners which she gave at her own house brought together the most distinguished citizens of Athens. She was, thus, courted and sought after by men of taste long after advancing age had caused the price of her favors to drop, for seeing this abandonment on the part of her lovers, she had reared, under her own eyes, a charming girl, whom she passed off as her niece, and who was called Gnathænon, or the little Gnathæne. This niece showed herself worthy of her aunt, and profited well from the lessons which she had received from the latter. These two hetairai acquired so much vogue on account of their innumerable repartees that we find the Samian Lynceus, in his *Apothegms*, giving us a curious summary of all the malicious and good-humored qualities which were attributed to the aunt or to the niece. Gnathæne, who feared being depicted upon the stage for the laughter of the Athenians, had attached to herself the comic poet Diphilus; but she did not spare him her bitter pleasantries, and at times it seemed she was trying to show that she was not afraid to meet him in the arena of comedy. Diphilus, puffed with vanity, wished to have no rivals, and Gnathæne, to satisfy him on this point, repeated to him smilingly the

Theban proverb: "Brambles never grow in Hercules' path." She had, nevertheless, as many lovers as she could take, and each of them was received at a different rate. Among the habitués of her house, a certain Syrian, who was not as generous as he might have been, still knew how to make himself agreeable through certain little attentions which were not very costly, but which were sufficiently diverting, and with which he paid Gnathæne for her good graces toward him. One day, at the festival of Venus, this Syrian sent her a vase filled with snow, and a sardine on a plate: "This snow is not as white as you," he wrote, "and this sardine is not so salty as your tongue." Gnathæne was about to reply, when there came a messenger from Dyphilus, bringing for the feast that evening two amphoras of the wine of Thrasos, two of the wine of Chios, a venison, fish, perfumes, crowns, ribbons and confections, the whole accompanied by a cook and a flute-player: "I wish," she said, "to have the presents of my Syrian friend figure also among the wines and food at supper." And so she ordered that the snow be melted in the wine of Chios, and that the sardine be mixed with the other fish. When supper was served and Dyphilus had arrived, the doors were closed; when the Syrian presented himself, he was told to be patient until the table was ready. Gnathæne, who knew that her Syrian was waiting outside, was ransacking her head for the means of getting him in and getting rid of Dyphilus. The latter began the libations and, commencing to drink: "By Jupiter!" he cried, "you have cooled my wine in the fountain; there is no other fountain in Athens whose water is so icy-cold." . . . "That may be," she replied, "for we never fail to toss into it the prologues of your dramas." Dyphilus, wounded by the epigram, did not reply but blushed and retired silently. Gnathæne at once admitted the Syrian and continued the supper with him. She ate, with the finest sort of appetite, the sardine which her preferred guest had given her: "It is a very little fish," she said, "but it gives me a very great pleasure."

Dyphilus was the scape-goat; Gnathæne, in order to rid herself of him till the following morning, had but to wound to the quick his poet's pride. One day, at the performance of one of his comedies, he was hissed by the audience and left the theatre to the sound of mocking laughter. He was so discouraged and chagrined that he conceived the idea of going to his mistress for consolation. She, however, had disposed of her night: she laughed still more at the set-back which Dyphilus had received, when the latter came to her; Dyphilus called



a slave and said to him, brusquely: "Wash my feet." . . . "What is the use?" replied Gnathæne, with a disdainful air: "Your feet ought not to be dusty, since the crowd has just done carrying you on its shoulders." Dyphilus did not ask for more, but left, very red and confused. Ordinarily, Gnathæne kept open table, and whoever wished a seat had but to pay in advance for the menu and to submit to the convivial laws which the courtesan had had put into verse by her Dyphilus, and which were to be read on a marble engraving at the entrance to the festal hall. These laws, in imitation of those which were enforced in the philosophic schools, began thus, according to Callimachus, who quotes them in his compendium of jurisprudence: "This law, equal and the same for all, has been written in 323 verses." It may be judged from this beginning that Gnathæne affected to show no preference among her lovers, pretending to impose the same conditions upon them all. "She was always elegant," says Athenæus, filling in the portrait. "She spoke with much grace." Nothing more was needed than her smile, the gleam of her teeth and the flame of her glance.

Following an orgy which had been held in her house, the guests beat one another with blows of their fists in disputing for her favors, which she herself had put up at auction. One of the combatants was thrown to the ground and forced to confess himself vanquished: "Console yourself," she said to him, "you may not carry off the crown after the combat, but at least you still have your silver." Her suppers often ended in a battle, and she belonged to the victor. One time, however, the young fellows whom she was entertaining wanted to tear the house down, because Gnathæne had refused to extend them credit; they were without money, but they cried out that they had picks and hatchets: "That's a pretty story!" she said, shrugging her shoulders, "if you had any, would you not have pawned them to pay me?" Otherwise, she did not look at any customer too closely, provided he paid well. On one occasion she found herself in bed with a rascal of a slave, who bore upon his back the scars of the whiplashes which his master had given him: "You have some terrible wounds there," she said to him. . . . "Yes," he replied. "It is where I burned myself from spilling soup on my shoulders." . . . "That must be a famous soup made of calf-skin lashes!" she replied. . . . "The soup was warm," he said stammeringly, "and I was but a child." . . . "They did right," she replied, "to whip you as they did to correct your ways." Her com-

panions had reason to fear the barbed darts which she let fly, right and left, but she met, upon occasion, with a tongue as biting as her own. She often quarreled with Mania, who was by no means her inferior in point of malice. They were so close that they were aware of each other's defects and mutual infirmities; if Mania was subject to the gravel, Gnathæne suffered from incontinence of urine and a chronic dropping of the abdomen. "Am I then the cause of your having stones?" she says angrily. . . . "If I had them, my poor dear," Mania replied, "I should give them to you to wall you up before and behind." The hetaira Dexithea invited Gnathæne to supper, but the dishes had barely appeared upon the table when the hostess had them taken away, ordering that they be conveyed to her mother: "If I had foreseen this," Gnathæne told her, "I should have gone to dine at your mother's house and not at yours." At the same supper they poured her, in a very slender goblet, a sixteen-year-old wine: "How do you find it?" Dexithea asked her. . . . "It seems to me it is very small for its age!" was Gnathæne's response. There was a certain unbearable babbler, who never ceased talking about the last voyage he had made in the Hellespont: "What!" interrupted Gnathæne, "and yet, you haven't visited the first city of that land?" . . . "Which one?" demanded the traveler. . . . "Sigeum," she replied, "the City of Silence," (from *sigein*, to keep silent). She had at one and the same time two paying tenants, an Armenian soldier and a Sicilian freedman; one of them said to her, in front of the other: "You are like the sea!" . . . "How do you mean?" she replied. "Is it because I receive two filthy streams, the Lycus of Armenia and the Eleutherus of Sicily?" Gnathæne, it may readily be surmised, had little difficulty about completing her education in such a school as that kept by her aunt, who otherwise looked well after her and often aided her with good advice. They went together, at the time of the festival of Venus, to seek their fortune in the temple of the goddess. When they came out, they were met by an old satrap, so wrinkled and broken that he looked to be ninety years old. The old man remarked of Gnathæne's beauty and, going up to Gnathæne, asked what it would cost to spend a night with that pretty child. Gnathæne, seeing the stranger's purple robe and judging his opulence by the number of slaves he had for escort, replied: "A thousand drachmas (1,000 francs)."\* . . . "What!" cried the satrap, feigning surprise, "just because you see me followed

\*Translator's Note:—Approximately \$176. Five minae, below, is about \$88.

by a great troop of people, you think you have me prisoner and will raise the price of my ransom? I will give you five minae (500 francs); it is a bargain, and I will come again." . . . "At your age," was Gnathæne's quick response, "it is a good deal to come once." . . . "My aunt," interrupted Gnathænion, "do not make a price. You shall give me what you please, Daddy, but I will wager, you will be so well satisfied with me that you will pay double, and that this night will be worth as much as two." Gnathænion had for lover an actor named Andronicus, who often paid her only in fine words; but this actor had won the support of the aunt by recalling her own amours with the comic poet Dyphilus. Gnathænion, however, preferred to Andronicus a rich foreign merchant who loaded her with gifts. The actor arrives with empty hands, and Gnathænion turns her back on him: "Do you see how haughtily your daughter treats me?" he said with a sigh to the old Gnathæne. . . . "Foolish little girl," said the latter to her niece, "embrace him, caress him if he asks it, and forget your moods." . . . "My mother," replied Gnathænion, "must I embrace a man who does so little for our republic, and who yet regards everything we have as his property?" Andronicus had just played with success the principal rôle in the *Epigoni* of Sophocles, but he was no longer rich. On leaving the stage, covered with perspiration and laden with wreaths, he summoned a slave and ordered him to announce his dramatic triumph to his mistress, with the request that she stand the expense of the supper which he would share with her that evening. Gnathænion received the slave and his message with this verse from the *Epigoni*: "Unhappy slave, what do you come to say?" And she shut the door in his face and went to join, at the Piræus, her merchant who was waiting for her. Her equipage was not fastidious; mounted on a small mule, she had for sole retinue three servants seated on asses and a valet who led the beast. On the way, she met, in a magnificent equipage, one of those wrestlers who never lost an occasion to appear at the public games, and who were always vanquished: "Knave of a groom!" he cried from afar, with the triumph air of a haughty athlete, "get out of the road, or I will upset the mule, the asses and the women." . . . "Fine!" replied Gnathænion, "you will be doing, then, what you have never done before, redoubtable champion!" The old Gnathæne, when told of this adventure, made an astute observation: "What wouldn't he pay to throw you to the ground?" This good aunt kept a watchful eye over the interests of her niece, for a certain gal-

lant, after a bargain concluded and faithfully executed on one side and the other, thinking he would get gratuitously from Gnathænon what he had paid a mina for the night before, met with this severe response from the girl: "Young man, do you think it is enough with us to have paid once, as you do in the riding academy of Hippomachus?" In her old age, we see the poor Gnathæne reduced to carrying on a trade which had won the nickname of *hippopornos* for the women and men who were dishonored by it. Diogenes, seeing a jockey of this sort pass on horseback, splendidly clad and laden with jewels, exclaimed: "I have long sought for the true *hippopornos*; I have met with it at last." The word *hippopornos* signified, literally, Prostitution on horseback. Gnathænon, as she grew older, led a more regular life and reared, not unrespectably, a daughter whom she had had by Andronicus, or whose father Andronicus was reported to be.

Laïs did not owe her celebrity to her bon mots, although those attributed to her are not inferior to those of Gnathæne and Gnathænon; it was her beauty, her incomparable beauty, which placed her above all the hetairai, and which made of her almost a Corinthian divinity. She was born at Hiccaræ in Sicily; when Nicias, the Athenian general, took this city and sacked it, the young child was brought to the Peloponnesus and sold as a slave. One day the painter Apelles met her, as she was coming back from the fountain with a vase of water on her head; divining that she was beautiful, he admired her and purchased her. The same day he took her to a feast, where his friends were astonished at seeing him accompanied by a young girl in place of a courtesan. "Do not trouble yourselves about that," he told them, "do not be surprised; I shall train her so well that before three years have passed she will know her trade to perfection." Apelles kept his word, and he undoubtedly had no small hand in the development of Laïs' talents and her graces. She went to set up house in Corinth, the city of courtesans, where a dream sent her by Venus Melanis informed her that she was soon to make a fortune. The dream was realized; the renown of Laïs spread over Asia, and from all parts a throng of rich strangers was to be seen coming to Corinth with no other object than to seek Laïs' favors; but they did not all achieve the object of their voyage. Laïs not only demanded exorbitant sums, but she also demanded the right to choose the hand which gave those sums; sometimes, out of caprice, she would accept nothing. Demosthenes, the illustrious orator, also desired to know what Laïs was worth; he took



with him all the silver he could lay his hands on and went to Corinth. He hunted up the courtesan and demanded the price of one of her nights. "Ten thousand drachmas,"\* Laïs replied. "Ten thousand drachmas!" exclaimed Demosthenes, who had not expected to pay more than the tenth part of this sum: "I do not pay so dear for the shame and chagrin of having to repent what I have done!" "It is because I also do not want to repent," said Laïs, "that I ask of you ten thousand drachmas." Demosthenes returned as he had come. Laïs, however, had a fondness for celebrated men; she had at the same time, as privileged lovers, the elegant and amiable philosopher, Aristippus, who paid her well, and the gross and dirty cynic, Diogenes, who would have found it hard to pay her at all. She preferred the latter to the former and did not appear to notice the fact that Diogenes smelled bad. As to the rival, he did not appear to be jealous and often, in order to see Laïs, he would wait at her door until she would come out, laden with perfumes, on the cynic's arm. "I possess Laïs," he would say to those who expressed astonishment at this arrangement, "but Laïs does not possess me." When told that Laïs was giving herself to him without love and without attraction, he would reply with the same phlegmatic indifference: "I do not think that wine and fish love me; yet I eat them with great pleasure." He was reproached for putting up with Laïs' daily prostitution, and advised to turn her out of doors. "I am not rich enough," he said, "to buy so precious an object for myself alone." "But," his friends objected, "will you ruin yourself for her?" . . . "I would give much, as a matter of fact," he replied, "to have the happiness of possessing her, but I should not want, for that reason, to see others deprived of her." Diogenes, on the contrary, despite his cynicism, looked with jealousy on the relations between Laïs and the brilliant philosopher, Aristippus. "Since you share with me the good graces of my mistress," he said to Aristippus one day, "You ought to share also my philosophy and take up the staff and cloak of the cynics." . . . "Does it appear to you strange, then," Aristippus replied, "to live in a house which has already been inhabited by others, or to board a vessel which has served to carry many passengers?" . . . "No, indeed!" replied the cynic, ashamed of his jealous feelings. . . . "Well, then! Why are you surprised that I see a woman who has seen other men before me and who will see still more after me?" Aristippus went with her every year to attend the

\**Translator's Note*:—A little less than \$1800.

festival of Neptune at Aegina, and during that time, he remarked, the house of the courtesan was as chaste as that of a matron.

This courtesan exercised such a sway over the two philosophers, Aristippus and Diogenes, that she believed there was not a philosopher in the world who could resist her. She was defied to overcome the virtue of Xenocrates, and accepted the wager, thinking a disciple of Plato would not be more difficult to conquer than a disciple of Socrates. One night, half-clad, she wrapped herself in a veil and went to knock on Xenocrates' door; he opened the door and was astonished to see a woman coming to his house. She told him that she had been pursued by thieves; her arms, her neck, her ears were laden with jewels which shone in the darkness. He thereupon consented to give her asylum until morning, and went back to his own bed, advising her to sleep upon a bench. But he was no sooner in his bed than Laïs, showing herself in all the splendor of her beauty, took her place at the philosopher's side; she approached him, she touched him, she forced herself between his arms, she attempted to animate him by caresses, which, however, left him cold and indifferent; then, she fell to weeping with rage and redoubled her embraces, recoiling from no sort of provocation. Xenocrates did not budge. Finally, she leaped out of this insulting bed and hid her shame once more under her veil. She had lost the wager, and when the sum which she had lost was demanded of her, she said: "I wagered that I would render a man, not a statue, sensible." Hers was a marvelous beauty; her throat was perfect, and painters as well as sculptors, who wished to depict Venus in a worthy fashion, besought Laïs to pose for the goddess. The sculptor Myron was admitted to look upon this adorable courtesan without veils; he was old, he had white hair and a grizzled beard, but he felt young again at the sight of Laïs; he leaped to his feet, offering her all he owned to possess her for one night; she smiled, shrugged her shoulders and left. The next day, Myron had had his hair and beard cut off; he was rouged and perfumed; he wore a scarlet robe and a golden girdle; he had a chain of gold on his throat and rings on all his fingers. He had himself brought into Laïs' presence and declared to her, with a haughty toss of the head, that he was in love with her. "My poor friend," replied Laïs, who had recognized him and was amused at the metamorphosis, "you are asking me what I refused your father yesterday."

She had to endure a refusal in her turn, when she fell in love with

Eubates, whom she met at the Olympic games, where he had come to contend for the prize. He was a handsome and noble youth, who had left at Cyrene a mistress whom he loved. Laïs had no sooner glimpsed him than she made him a declaration of love, in terms so clear and pressing that Eubates was very embarrassed in replying to her. She besought him to become her guest and take up his abode at her house; he excused himself, saying he had need of all his strength in order to win the victory in the games. She became more and more inflamed each instant and trembled lest the object of her passion should escape her. "Swear to me," she said, "to take me back with you to Cyrene, if you are the victor!" To escape her persecution, he gave her his oath and thus preserved his fidelity to his own well-beloved; otherwise, he would have ended by succumbing to Laïs' all-powerful gaze. Eubates was the victor; Laïs sent him a golden crown, but she learned shortly afterward that Eubates has returned to Cyrene. "He has broken his oath," she said to a friend of Eubates. "He has kept it," the friend replied, "for he has taken back with him your portrait." Eubates' mistress was so astonished at such fidelity and continence, when she learned what had passed, that she erected in honor of her lover a statue to Minerva. Laïs, to revenge herself, erected another, representing Eubates with the features of Narcissus. This proud hetaira had about her constantly a court of flatterers and enthusiastic admirers; many cities of Greece contended for the glory of having been her birthplace; the most considerable personages felt honored at having had relations with her; and yet, a few foolish moralists would remind her, occasionally, that her trade was a shameful one. This was what a tragic poet did, who alluded to her prostitution by exclaiming in one of his plays: "Away from me, infamous woman!" Laïs caught sight of him as he was leaving the theater and stopped him to inquire, in the most caressing voice, what he meant by this cruel apostrophe. "You are, yourself, one of those whom I was addressing!" he informed her brutally. . . . "Is that so!" she replied gaily, "but you know that verse of tragedy: 'Only that is shameful which one makes by thinking so.' " The verse was aptly quoted from a piece by this same poet, who did not know what to reply. Athenæus reports, after Macho, that the poet whose disdain Laïs thus punished was Euripides himself, but if this was the case, we should have to assign this anecdote to Laïs' early youth, seeing that she was in Apelles' service when Euripides died, in the year 407 before Christ. However this may be,

Laïs' rejoinder became proverbial, and since it was used as a cloak to cover many sins, the old philosopher Antisthenes thus revised the courtesan's dictum. "That which is filthy is filthy, whether it appears so or not to those who are guilty of it." Laïs, in place of disputing this new apothegm, adopted it as Antisthenes had formulated it. "That old man is right," she said to Diogenes, who was Antisthenes' disciple. "He is as squalid as he appears." . . . "And I?" replied Diogenes, wounded in his cynic soul. . . . "As for you," she said, "I know nothing, since I love you."

Laïs had amassed an immense fortune, but she caused to be constructed temples and public edifices; she had sculptors, painters and cooks on her pay roll, and thus ruined herself. She had, happily, a taste for her trade, to such a degree that she did not regret being obliged to continue it at an age when most courtesans retired. She was, moreover, still very beautiful, although the price of her favors had singularly dropped; for this she consoled herself with drink. Epicrates, quoted by Athenaeus, has given us a touching picture of Laïs' old age, when all she had left was her name. "Laïs is idle and drunken. She comes wandering among the tables. To me, she is like one of those birds of prey which, in the strength of youth, hurl themselves from the summit of mountains and carry off young goats, but which, in old age, perch languidly on the pinnacles of temples, where they live consumed by hunger, a sinister augury. Laïs, in her spring-time, was rich and superb. It was easier to approach the satrap Pharnabazus than her. But now, her winter is coming; the temple is fallen in ruins and the door swings open readily; she stops the first comer to drink with him, a stater, a three-oboles-piece, are a fortune to her. Young and old, she takes everybody; age has so softened her disposition that she holds out her hand for a few pieces of money." This passage from the comedy entitled the *Anti-Laïs* was perhaps but an hyperbole due to the rancor of a poet whom the courtesan had ill-received. Aelianus relates, also, that she was not of easy access until her old age had cooled the ardor of her pursuers; they had even nicknamed her *Axine*,\* on account of her indomitable avarice. Athenaeus tells us, however, basing his statement upon a well-established tradition, that there was no difference between the offers of the rich and those of the poor. This detail, probably, was only true at that period of her life when debauchery was the consolation of her misery.

\*Translator's Note:—"Battle-Ax."



The thing which shows us the oblivion into which she had sunk at the end of her amorous career is the obscurity which envelops the date and circumstances of her death. She was then seventy years old, according to some, fifty-five according to others; the latter insisted that she was well-preserved; the former asserted, on the contrary, that she was on the verge of utter decrepitude. Whatever may have been her age and her looks, the *Anthology* has her dedicating her mirror to Venus, with an inscription which Voltaire has imitated in these charming verses:

Je le donne a Vénus, puisqu'elle est toujours belle:  
 Il redouble trop mes ennuis!  
 Je ne saurais me voir dans ce miroir fidèle  
 Ni telle que j'étais ni telle que je suis.\*

As to the nature of her death, one does not know whether to believe Plutarch, Athenaeus, or Ptolemaeus. The last affirms that she strangled to death while eating olives; Athenaeus relies on the authority of Philetaerus to show that she died in the practice of her trade as a courtesan (*ouchi Laïs men teleutos apethane binoumene*) and Plutarch reports that, being senile and in love with a young Thessalian named Hippolochus, she followed him into Thessaly and entered a temple of Venus, where he had fled for refuge from the embraces of this Bacchante; but the women of the country, indignant at her audacity, and still jealous of her beauty, which was no more than a memory, surrounded the temple with great cries and stoned her before the altar of Venus, which was stained with the courtesan's blood. After this murder, the temple was dedicated to Venus the Homicidal and to Venus the Profaned. They erected a tomb for Laïs on the banks of the Peneus, with this epitaph: "Greece, once invincible and fertile in heroes, has been vanquished and reduced to slavery by the divine beauty of that Laïs, daughter of Love, brought up in the school of Corinth, who reposes in the noble fields of Thessaly." Corinth likewise dedicated a monument to the memory of its illustrious pupil; this monument represented a lioness felling a ram. It is possible that the incidents of Laïs' life are not all to be attributed to the same woman,

\**Translator's Note*:—I give it to Venus, since she is always fair:

It merely increases my ennui!  
 I cannot look into this mirror and compare  
 Myself with what I was or seem to be.

and that two or three hetairai of the same name, who lived at about the same time, have been confused at once by historians and by popular tradition. Thus, Alciabides' mistress, Damasandra, had a daughter named Laïs, one who was known for her beauty even more than for her gallantries. Pliny notes another Laïs, who was a midwife, and who had invented secret remedies and philtres for augmenting or diminishing the embonpoint of women. This Laïs was a courtesan, as were her friends, Salpe and Elephantis, who, like herself, were very expert in the art of cosmetics, abortions, and aphrodisiac beverages. They cured also madness and the quartan fever; and, in all their drugs, they employed different kinds of menstrual blood, mingled with more or less innocent substances. The city of Corinth gloried in having been the scene of Laïs' fastidious prostitutions but no city of Greece could boast of having beheld this queen of courtesans when she was old, broken and forgotten, engaged in making powders, ointments and elixirs and selling love in a bottle.

Another hetaira, a contemporary of Laïs and not less celebrated, was Phryne, who did not have so saddening a decline nor an end so tragic. Despite her immense riches, she never ceased to increase them by the same means, and, since she lost nothing of her magnificent figure as she grew older, she still had lovers who paid her heavily, even to the eve of her death. This was what she gaily called "selling dearly the lees of her wine." She was of Thespia, but she resided constantly at Athens, where she led a very retired existence, showing herself neither in the Ceramicus nor at the theater, neither in the stadium nor at the ordinary religious or civil festivals. She never went into the street without being veiled and clad in a flowing tunic like the most austere matron. She did not go to the public baths and frequented only the studios of painters and sculptors; for she loved the arts, and devoted herself to them, so to speak, by posing in the nude for Apelles' brush and Praxiteles' chisel. Her beauty was that of a statue of Parian marble; her features and the lines of her face possessed the purity, the harmony and the nobility which the imagination of the poet and the artist give to a divine image; but her complexion, dull and even slightly yellow, had won for her the nickname of Phryne, meaning toad; for her family name was Mnesarete, but she was not known under that name. The pictures and statues which her favorite painter and sculptor made of her excited the admiration of all Greece, which worshipped physical

beauty as a part of the religion of Venus. Phryne possessed nothing more remarkable than that which she modestly hid from all eyes, even from the glances of her lovers, who only possessed her in semi-darkness; but at the mysteries of Eleusis, she appeared as a goddess in the portico of the temple, and, letting fall her garments in the presence of the crowd which stood astonished and breathless with admiration, passed in eclipse behind a veil of purple. At the festivals of Neptune and of Venus, she also left off her garments on the steps of the temple and, with only her long ebony hair to cover the nudity of her beautiful body, which shone in the sun, advanced toward the sea in the midst of the people, who parted with respect to let her pass, and who greeted her with a cry of unanimous enthusiasm. Phryne entered the waves to render homage to Neptune, and she came out like Venus at her birth; one saw her for a moment on the sand, shaking off the salty waves which trickled down the length of her plump thighs; one saw her wringing out her dripping hair; and one would have said then that Venus had been born a second time. Following this instant of triumph, Phryne robed herself amid acclamations and took to hiding once more in an every day obscurity. But the effect of this apparition was nothing less than prodigious, and the renown of the courtesan filled all mouths and ears. Each year, more and more of the curious ones attended the mysteries of Eleusis and the festivals of Neptune and Venus, with no other object than to catch a glimpse of Phryne.

So much glory for a courtesan brought down upon her the envy and the hatred of virtuous women; the latter, to avenge themselves, made use of Euthias, who had futilely besieged Phryne without obtaining from her that which she accorded only to money or to genius. This Euthias was an informer of the vilest sort; he accused Phryne before the tribunal of the Heliasts of having profaned the majesty of the Eleusinian mysteries by parodying them, and of being constantly engaged in corrupting the most illustrious citizens of the republic, by seducing them from the service of the fatherland. Such an accusation carried with it not merely death for the accused but meant, also, the infliction of a stigma upon the courtesans, as a body, and a fine and even exile for some of them. Phryne had had for lover the orator, Hyperides, who was then sharing his attentions between Myrrhine and Bacchis. Phryne besought these two hetairai to bring pressure to bear on Hyperides to defend her against Euthias. The

position was a delicate one for Hyperides, who was particularly interested in coming to the aid of Phryne, whom he had loved, and in coping with Euthias, whom he detested as the most cowardly of men. Phryne wept, wrapped in her veils and covering her face with her two ivory hands; and Hyperides, much moved and greatly disturbed, stretched out his arms toward her by way of indicating that he would defend her; and when Euthias had formulated his accusations, through Aristogiton, Hyperides spoke, asserting that he was not unfamiliar with the case, since Phryne had been his mistress, and imploring the judges to take his own feelings into account. His countenance altered, his bosom heaved with sighs, his eyes filled with tears, and still, the tribunal, cold and silent, seemed disposed not to relent. Hyperides was all too well aware of the danger which threatened the accused; and so, he burst into maledictions against Euthias; he resolutely proclaimed the innocence of the latter's victim; he gave an account of the almost religious part that Phryne had played in the Eleusinian mysteries . . . The Heliasts interrupted him; they were about to pronounce the fatal sentence; then, Hyperides summoned Phryne and tore off her veils; he snatched away her tunic, invoking, with a sympathetic eloquence, the sacred prerogatives of beauty to save this worthy priestess of Venus. The judges were moved, transported, at sight of so many charms; they felt that they were looking on the goddess herself; Phryne was saved, and Hyperides bore her off in his arms; he had fallen more in love than ever at beholding once more that marvelous beauty which had had more effect than his own eloquence upon the judges; and Phryne, for her part, as a recompense, became once more the mistress of her advocate, who turned traitor to Myrrhine. The latter sought to avenge herself by taking Euthias' part and according to that sycophant all that Phryne had refused him. The courtezans were indignant that one of their number should dare to protest in such a manner against the sentence which had absolved Phryne; and Bacchis served as their interpreter, when she wrote to the imprudent Myrrhine: "You have rendered yourself an object of aversion to all of us who are devoted to the service of Venus Benefactor!"

She was not slow, as a matter of fact, in repenting of having yielded to an impulse of jealousy and vanity. Hyperides, who had left her, did not return; he remained in love with Phryne for a long time. "He has a friend worthy of him and of his fine soul," wrote Bacchis to



Myrrhine, "and you, you have a lover of the sort you deserve!" Hyperides, by coming forward as the courtesan's defender, had won for himself more honor and profit than he would have gained by defending the first citizens of the republic; there was talk of nothing else throughout Greece but of his talent as an orator; the public was tireless in applauding the fine burst of eloquence which had constituted his peroration; presents and tributes of praise poured in on him from all sides, and, as the climax of his blessings, Phryne now belonged to him. If the Greek hetairai did not raise to him a golden statue, as Bacchis proposed, they spared no other pains in showing their gratitude. "All the courtezans of Athens in general," wrote Bacchis, speaking for her companions, "and each of them in particular ought to render you as many thanks as Phryne." It may be presumed that Hyperides' plea was public property, since that of Aristogiton, who spoke for Euthias, was known in the time of Athenaeus. It is known, also, that Euthias, who had turned calumniator only on account of love, would not rest till Phryne had pardoned him, and that to obtain this pardon, he agreed to the most ruinous conditions. Bacchis had foreseen this outcome, when she wrote to Phryne: "Euthias is a good deal more in love with you than Hyperides. The latter, by reason of the important service he rendered you, in giving you his protection and the aid of his eloquence under the most critical circumstances, appears to demand of you the greatest regard and to be conferring a favor upon you by according you his caresses; whereas the other's passion can only be stimulated to the highest degree by the ill success of his odious enterprise. And so, you have but to wait for fresh advances on his part, for the most pressing solicitations; he will offer you gold in profusion." Gold took away Phryne's resentment. The Areopagus, which had had no sentence to pronounce in this circumstance, foresaw a possible case of the same sort which might come before it, and in which the same means of defense might be employed; it did not wish to be exposed to those seductions which had subdued the Heliasts; and so, it promulgated a law forbidding advocates to employ any artifice in exciting the pity of judges and forbidding the accused to appear in person before the judges before sentence had been pronounced. Phryne, for her part, fearing a new accusation, not only refrained, thereafter, from taking part in the festivals and religious ceremonies, but busied herself with gaining adherents and, in a manner, winning subjects, even among the members of the Areopagus.

She opened her bed and her table to gourmands and to libertines; and a senator of the Areopagus named Gryllion even compromised himself to the point of becoming the *courtezan's parasite*, as Satyrus describes him, in his *Pamphile*.

The riches which Phryne had acquired surpassed those of a king; the comic poets, Timocles in his *Nerea*, Amphis in his *Kouris*, and Posidippus in his *Ephesia*, spoke of the scandal which this opulence created. Phryne, however, made an honorable use of it; she caused to be built, at her expense, various public monuments, especially in the city of Corinth, which all the hetairai looked upon as their native country, on account of the money which they had gained there. When Alexander the Great had destroyed Thebes and overthrown its walls, Phryne recalled the fact that she had been born in Boeotia, and she proposed to the Thebans that she rebuild their city out of her own funds, with the single condition that this inscription be engraved in her honor: *Thebes was overthrown by Alexander and rebuilt by Phryne*. The Thebans, however, declined to immortalize a prostitute. Phryne, as a woman of Boeotia, had not received from Heaven any gifts of mind; but she was distinguished from the majority of women by a lively feeling for the arts; she regarded herself as a living image of the divine beauty; she paid homage to herself in the works of Apelles and Praxiteles; the one had modeled after her his Venus of Cnidus; the other had painted her as he had seen her at the festivals of Neptune and Venus, coming forth from the waves. Both were her lovers, but Praxiteles won the day over his rival. Phryne demanded of him, as a token of their love, the most beautiful statue which he had ever made. "Choose!" replied Praxiteles; but she requested a delay of several days in order to make her choice. In the interval, while Praxiteles was at her house, a slave covered with sweat came running up to cry that the sculptor's studio was on fire. "Ah! I am lost," said Praxiteles, "if my Satyr and my Cupid are burned" . . . "I choose the Cupid," interrupted Phryne. It was a ruse which she had thought up in order to ascertain the artist's opinion of his own works. Afterwards, Phryne presented the masterpiece to her native city. Caligula caused it to be taken from Thespia and transported to Rome, but Claudius, in one of his praetorian decisions, ordered that the Cupid be restored to the Thespians "in order to appease the manes of Phryne," as the sentence read. The statue had barely been put back on its vacant pedestal when Nero once more had it brought to Rome, and it perished in the

conflagration of that city, which was started by Nero himself. Phryne, however rich she may have been, continued her daily industry, to the age of wrinkles and white hair. She boasted of being the possessor of a pomade which entirely concealed wrinkles; she employed so many drugs in rouging herself that Aristophanes was led to remark, in one of his comedies, "Phryne has made her cheeks an apothecary's shop," and this line of verse passed into a proverb among the Greeks, by way of designating women who rouged themselves.

The date of Phryne's death and the place of her burial are unknown; we merely learn from Pausanias that her friends, her lovers and compatriots were assessed in order to erect a golden statue to her in the temple of Diana at Ephesus; on the plinth, a column of Pentelic marble, was to be read an inscription: "This statue is the work of Praxiteles." It was placed between the statues of two kings, Archinamus, King of Lacedæmonia, and Philip, King of Macedonia, with the legend: *To Phryne, an illustrious woman of Thespia*. It was this statue against which the philosopher Crates inveighed by exclaiming: "Behold, a monument to the immorality of Greece!" The name of Phryne had become, like that of Laïs, a synonym for beautiful courtesan, and many women of this class called themselves Phryne. In order to distinguish the first Phryne from her humble imitators, the former was called the *Thespian*. Herodicus, in his *History of Those Who Have Been Bantered in the Theatre*, cites a Phryne nicknamed the *Sieve*, for the reason that she ruined her lovers in the same way that a sieve extracts flour mingled with bran. According to Apollodorus in his *Treatise on Courtezans*, there were two Phrynes, nicknamed *Clauwige-laos* (she who makes one weep after having made one laugh) and *Saperdion* (superb fish), but neither the one nor the other seems to have been confused with the illustrious Thespian.

If Phryne and Laïs are the two personifications, the most celebrated if not the most brilliant, of hetairism, Pythionice and Glycera are even better representatives of its power and influence. Pythionice and Glycera were almost queens of Babylon, after having been simple courtezans at Athens. The former was remarkable only for her beauty, but she possessed certain of those secrets of debauchery which exercised so much sway over vicious natures and voluptuous temperaments. Glycera, not less beautiful, not less clever, it may be, was, at the same time, more intelligent and wittier. Harpalus, the friend of Alexander of Macedonia and the governor of Babylon, loved them

both, and was inconsolable for the loss of the first until he had met the second. Harpalus was Alexander's high-treasurer, and when his master had left on the expedition for the Indies, made no scruples of dipping both hands into the treasury which had been confided to his care. He surpassed in magnificence the ancient kings of Babylon, and wished to enjoy all the pleasures which gold and power are capable of creating. He had about him flute-players of Miletus, dancers of Lesbos, crown-braiders of Cyprus, and slaves and concubines of all lands; he brought an hetaira from Athens who was the most in vogue there, and who best satisfied his libidinous needs. Pythionice enjoyed the honor of being chosen as the little tyrant Harpalus' daily mistress. She was at the time the joint mistress of two brothers, sons of one Cheoererhilus, who did a business in stale fish, and who owed to this business his immense fortune. Pythionice's two lovers kept her at great expense, and the comic poet Timocles, in his comedy, *The Icarians*, had bantered the hetaira concerning her riches, which, according to her companions, smelled of the sea: "Pythionice will receive you with open arms, in order to get from you, through her caresses, all that I have given you, for she is insatiable. However, ask her for a vat of stale fish; she always has plenty, being content with a couple of *saperdes*, not stale and with wide mouths." The *saperdis*, the consumption of which was considerable among the lower classes, was looked upon as a bad fish, as the great sophist of the culinary art, Archestratus, solemnly states. Pythionice, who had been the slave of the flute-player Bacchis, who was herself the slave of the hetaira, Synope, became, all of a sudden, a sort of queen in the palace of Babylon, but she did not enjoy so rare a fortune for very long; she died, poisoned no doubt, and the inconsolable Harpalus gave her a royal funeral. She had by him a daughter who afterward married the sculptor-architect, Charicles, the same whom Harpalus entrusted with the erection at Athens of a sepulchral monument to the memory of Pythionice. This favorite had, moreover, a tomb at Babylon, where she had died. The monument erected on the sacred road which led from Athens to Eleusis cost thirty talents (about 250,000 francs in our money).\* Its size, even more than its architecture, attracted the traveler's gaze. "Whoever sees it," exclaims Dicaearchus, in his work on the *Descent Into the Cave of Trophonius*, "will probably remark at first, and with reason, that this must be the monument of a Miltiades,

\*Translator's Note:—Over \$43,000.



a Pericles or a Cimon, or some other great man. 'Undoubtedly, it has been erected at the expense of the state or at least by decree of the magistrates.' But when he learns that this monument has been built in memory of the hetaira, Pythionice, what must he think of the city of Athens?" Harpalus had so hastened the work on these funeral structures that they were finished before the end of Alexander's expedition to the Indies. Theopompus, in a letter to the king of Macedonia, affirms that the governor of Babylon employed the enormous sum of two hundred talents\* for his mistress' two tombs. "Why!" cries the indignant Theopompus, "we have somewhere since, seen two admirable monuments completed for Pythionice: the one near Athens, the other at Babylon; and he who claimed to be your friend will dedicate with impunity a temple and an altar to a woman who abandoned herself to all those who contributed to her upkeep, and he will dedicate this monument as the temple and the altar of Venus Pythionice! Is not this openly to call down the vengeance of the gods, and to fail in that respect which is due to you?" Alexander was then too occupied in fighting Porus to pay any attention to what was happening at Babylon or at Athens, where Harpalus was engaged in apotheosizing a courtesan.

Harpalus, moreover, had already replaced Pythionice; a simple wreath-plaiter of Sicyon, Glycera, daughter of Thalassiss, had won the love of the governor of Babylon, with so much *savoir-faire* that she had become almost a queen at Tarsus, and she would have become a goddess, if Harpalus had survived her. But Alexander returned victorious from the Indus, and felt that he had to punish those of his officers who, during his absence, had shown so little respect for his orders. Harpalus perceived that he was more compromised than the others, and he was frightened, himself, at his own monstrous embezzlements. He fled from Tarsus, with Glycera and all that remained in the treasury, and took refuge in Attica, where he implored the aid of the Athenians against Alexander. He had raised an army of six thousand mercenaries, and he offered to buy, at any price, the protection of Athens; with the aid and in accordance with counsels of Glycera, he corrupted orators, bought Demosthenes' silence and interested the people in his cause through the distribution of flour, which was called *Glycera's wheat*, and which provided a proverbial locution to signify "the wages of ruin, rather than of success." It is thus that this

\*Translator's Note:—Nearly \$300,000.

wheat is distinguished in a satiric comedy of which Harpalus was the hero, and which Alexander caused to be performed throughout all Asia by way of humbling Harpalus' pride. It was even reported that he was the author of this drama, which tells how the magi of Babylon, witnessing the affliction of Harpalus at the death of Pythionice, had promised to call her back from the land of shades to the light of day; but it is more probable that this drama was composed, on the instigation of Alexander, by Python of Catana or of Byzantium. However this may be, Harpalus did not succeed, with the aid of Glycera, in assuring himself of an asylum in the republic of Athens; he was banished from there and retired to Crete, fearing the vengeance of Alexander, who had spared him; but he was assassinated by one of his own captains, who wished to lay hands on the treasure which Harpalus himself had stolen from the King of Macedonia. Glycera succeeded in escaping and returned, wholly shorn of her grandeur, to Athens, where she resumed her former trade of courtesan. She was no longer the Queen of Tarsus, who had received honors little less than divine, and who had had her statue in bronze erected in the temples opposite that of Harpalus; she was an hetaira of an age sufficiently advanced and with a beauty that was a little worn, but with a mind that was still indefatigable. Lynceus of Samos deemed her *bon mots* worthy of being collected, and he made such a collection of them but one that has not come down to us. Athenaeus quotes a few of these sallies, handed down by Glycera's contemporaries; we have already reported a number of them. The two which follow may also belong to her. "You are corrupting the youth!" the philosopher Stilpon said to her. . . . "What does it matter if I amuse them," she replied. "You who are a sophist, you corrupt them also, but you bore them." A man who came to buy her favors remarked some eggs in a basket. "Are they raw or cooked?" he asked her, to make conversation. . . . "They are silver," she replied maliciously, in order to lead him back to the subject of their conversation.

Her adventure at Babylon and Tarsus had made her the mode; she was looked upon as one of the Harpalus heirs. Glycera, however, attached herself by preference to two men of genius, to the painter, Pausias, and the poet, Menander. The first painted the flowers which she plaited into wreaths and garlands, endeavoring to imitate and equal the brilliancy of his models; he made a portrait of Glycera, depicted as seated and plaiting a wreath; this ravishing picture, which

was called the *Stephanoplocos* (wreath-plaiter), was brought to Rome and purchased by Lucullus, who valued it as much as he did all the other pictures in his collection. The affection of Glycera for Menander lasted longer than did her affair with Pausias. She put up with the bad humor, the whims and the doldrums of the comic poet, to whom she was the devoted servant rather than the preferred mistress; Menander frequently reproached her with being no longer what she had once been, and bitterly demanded of her an account of her foolish youth; he was jealous of the past as well as of the present. "You would love me well enough," he told her, "if I had robbed Alexander's treasuries." She smiled and made no reply to these harsh words, except by showing herself more devoted than ever to his needs. He came back from the theatre one evening sad, irritated and disheartened at the ill success of one of his pieces; he was dripping with perspiration and his throat was dry. Glycera offered him milk, and gently urged him to take some refreshments. "This milk smells sour," said Menander, repelling the vase and the hand that offered it; "this milk is repugnant to me; it is covered with a rancid and disgusting cream." It was a cruel allusion to the white lead and the rouge that hid Glycera's wrinkles. "Good!" she said gaily, "do not stop on that account; leave what is on top and take what is underneath." She loved him truly, and she feared a younger woman might take the affection which she occasionally was able to hold only by artifice. For Menander was changeful and capricious in love; but he, nevertheless, allowed himself to be held by Glycera's passionate devotion and he immortalized her. "I should rather be," said Glycera, "Menander's Queen than the Queen of Tarsus." Glycera, after her death, did not have a splendid tomb like the *prostitute's monument* (for it was thus the tomb of Pythionice had come to be designated), but her name remained, in the memory of the Greeks, closely bound up with that of Menander and was not less celebrated than those of Laïs, of Phryne and of Aspasia.

## CHAPTER XIV

EGYPT, Phoenicia and Greece had colonized Sicily and Italy, and had established there their religions, their manners and their customs. Sacred Prostitution, from early times, had not failed to follow the migrations of the goddesses and the gods, who changed climate without changing character. The written monuments, which bear witness to the origin of this sort of Prostitution in the island of Cyclops, and in the peninsula of Saturn, have existed no longer for many centuries, but there are to be found in the Etruscan and Italian-Greek cemeteries, a multitude of painted vases representing different scenes of sacred Prostitution before the foundation of Rome. It is always the same offerings which the virgins had brought to the temples of Babylon and of Tyre, of Bubastis and of Naucratis, of Corinth and of Athens. The consecrated one comes and takes her seat in the sanctuary near the goddess' statue; a stranger bargains for the price of her modesty, and she deposits this price upon the altar, which is enriched by this shameful commerce, to which the priest alone is an interested party. Such is, according to the funeral vases, the almost invariable form that sacred Prostitution assumed in the Egyptian, Phoenician and Greek colonies. The cult of Venus was, certainly, the first in point of honor; for it was there, as everywhere else, the most attractive and the most natural; but we are absolutely in ignorance as to the names and attributes taken by the goddess allegorical of the creation of human beings. These names were so little analogous to those given her in the later Roman theogony that the learned Varro, relying upon the authority of Macrobius, maintains that Venus was not known at Rome under the kings. But Macrobius and Varro should have stated, merely, that she did not yet possess a temple within the city of Romulus; for she was already adored in Etruria before Rome had subjugated this land, which was for a long time at war with her. Vitruvius, in his *Treatise on Architecture*, asserts that, according to the principles of the Etruscan soothsayers, the temple of Venus could not be placed anywhere except beyond the walls and near the gates of the city, in order that the distance of the temple from the city might not provide the young people with too frequent an occasion for



debauchery, and might assure mothers of families of more security.

Sacred Prostitution was not the only form that prevailed in primitive Italy; it might be said that Guest Prostitution and legal Prostitution were prevalent at the same time, the first in the forests and mountains, the second in the cities. The paintings on the Etruscan vases leave us in no ignorance as to the already refined corruption which had found its way among these aboriginal peoples, who were the blind and gross slaves of their senses and their passions. Sufficient moral deductions may be made from the wealth and variety of the jewels which the women wore, to enable us to judge of the development of Prostitution, born of feminine coquetry and the needs of the toilet. We see, from a thousand evidences on the painted vases, that the lubricity of these indigenous or exotic peoples knew no social or religious restraint. Bestiality and pederasty were their original vices, and these abominations, naïvely familiar to all ages and ranks of society, found no remedy except in the ceremonies of expiation and purification, which sometimes interfered with the free practice of these vices. As among all ancient peoples, the promiscuity of sexes had to do with the law of nature; and the woman, submissive to the brutal needs of the man, was ordinarily but the patient instrument of his pleasures; she almost never dared speak out her choice, and she belonged to the one that had the might to take her. The physical conformation of the savage ancestors of the Romans, moreover, shows us all that might be expected of such a race in the way of sensuality; they had virile parts analogous to those of the bull and the dog; they resembled goats, and they wore over the lower part of the loins a sort of tuft of russet-colored hair which it is impossible to regard as a purely conventional emblem, in those designs which portray that posterior goat-beard, that excrescence at once fleshy and hairy, that rudiment of a true animal's tail. It would be difficult to say at what period so strange a symbol of bestial temperament entirely disappeared, but it was preserved in the allegorical iconology as a distinctive characteristic of a satyr and a fawn. Among races so naturally given to carnal love, Prostitution was undoubtedly associated with all the acts of civil and religious life.

It is this Prostitution which is to be discovered in the cradle of Rome, where Remus and Romulus were nourished by a wolf. If we are to believe the old historian Valerius, cited by Aurelius Victor, by Aulus Gellius, and by Macrobius, this wolf was none other than a

courtesan, named Acca Laurentia, the mistress of the shepherd Faustulus, who took in the twins who had been abandoned on the banks of the Tiber. Acca Laurentia had been nicknamed the Wolf (*lupa*) by the shepherds of the country, all of whom knew her from having often met her wandering in the woods, and all of whom had enriched her with their gifts. She even possessed, as a result of her prostitution, the fields that lay between the seven hills, and which were bequeathed by her to her adopted children, who founded there the Eternal City. Macrobius states with no reservations that the Wolf had made a fortune by abandoning herself without choice to all who paid her (*meretricio quaestu locupletatam*). And so, the Roman people had for nurse a courtesan, and their point of departure was a *lupanar*.\* For this was the name given to Acca Laurentia's hut, and the term was afterward applied to the obscene retreats of women like her, who were named *wolves* in memory of her. We have seen, moreover, that among the Greeks there were *wolves* of the same race. The one who nourished Remus and Romulus, who had bought, with the product of her debauchery, the first Roman territory, must have practiced her shameful trade for a long time; *corpus in vulgus dabat*, says Aulus Gellius, *pecuniamque emeruerat ex eo quaestu uberem*. She died with the reputation of a great courtesan, and festivals, moreover, were instituted in her honor, under the name of the *Lupercalia*; if she was not honored with a temple, it was undoubtedly owing to the fear of branding such a temple with the name of *Lupanar*, which had dishonored her dwelling; the founding of the *Lupercalia* was excused on the ground that they were funeral festivals, celebrated in the month of December, on the anniversary of her death; and soon, out of respect for public decency, the *Lupercalia* came to be attributed to the god Pan. It would appear, then, that the first festival instituted at Rome by Romulus and Remus, or by their adopted father, the shepherd Faustulus, was one in memory of the wolf, Acca Laurentia.

This festival, which existed down to the fifth century after Christ, not without undergoing numerous vicissitudes, was one quite worthy of a courtesan. The *luperci*, priests of the god Pan, their bodies entirely naked with the exception of a sheepskin-girdle, holding in one hand a bloody knife and in the other a whip, would run through the streets of the city, threatening men with the knife and striking

\*Translator's Note:—Literally, house of the wolf. *Lupa*, wolf, also became the name for "a common prostitute, harlot, whore." (Andrews: *Latin-English Lexicon*.)

women with the whip. The latter, far from endeavoring to escape the blows, sought them with eagerness and received them without compunction. Here we have the origin of that emblematic foot race which was supposed to be a remedy against the sterility of women and to render the latter pregnant, if the divine whip had touched them in the right place. When Romulus' Romans had carried off the Sabine women for the sake of wives and children, the women were at first backward about doing what was expected of them; their forced union bore no fruit, although they had no cause to complain of their ravishers. They went to invoke Juno in a wood consecrated to Pan, and the oracle there inspired in them a certain apprehension. "It is necessary that a goat," said the oracle, "should make you mothers." One did not have to look far for the goat; a priest of Pan saved them the trouble by immolating a goat on the spot and by cutting off thongs from the animal's skin, with which he flagellated the Sabine women, who became pregnant as the result of this flagellation, which it was the function of the Lupercalia to perpetuate. Latin mythology assigned another origin to this race of the Lupercalia, an origin more poetic but less national. Hercules was traveling with Omphale; a Faun perceived them and followed them into their hiding place in the hope of profiting for a moment, when Hercules left his beauty's side to accomplish one of his twelve labors. The two lovers were resting in a grotto and supping together; Hercules and Omphale had changed clothes in order to amuse themselves during the supper; Omphale was wrapped in the lion skin of Nemeus and had put on her back the quiver filled with poisoned arrows; Hercules, uncovering his hairy chest, had put on the necklace and bracelets of his mistress. In this disguise, they were drinking together and had become intoxicated. They fell asleep, each on his own side of the grotto, on a litter of dried leaves; whereupon the Faun entered the cavern and began groping for Omphale's couch. Prudently avoiding the lion's skin, he entered Hercules' bed. Hercules awoke and chastised the audacious Faun, who had gone a little too far. It was after this adventure that Pan conceived a horror of the disguise which had deceived his Faun, and he commanded, as a precaution against errors of this sort, that his priests should run absolutely naked at the Lupercalia. There were sacrifices, on that day, of he-goats and she-goats, which the Lupercal priests skinned, in order to clothe themselves in these bloody hides, which were reputed to increase the warmth of desire and to confer a bounding ardor upon

the lascivious worshipers of the god Pan. Sacred Prostitution was thus the soul of the Luperalia.

These were not the only festivals or the only cult which Prostitution had established at Rome. Under the reign of Ancus Martius, a courtesan named Flora took to herself the name of Acca Laurentia, in memory of the nurse of Romulus and Remus. She was remarkably beautiful, but she was no longer rich. She passed a night in the temple of Hercules in order to obtain the protection of that powerful god. Hercules announced to her in a dream that the first person she should meet upon leaving the temple would bring her happiness. She met a patrician named Tarutius, who had considerable property. He no sooner saw her than he fell in love with her and proposed marriage. He made her his heir upon his death, and Flora, upon whom this marriage had conferred a position in society, thereupon resumed her former trade of courtesan and acquired by it an enormous fortune, which she left as a heritage to the Roman people. Her legacy was accepted, and the Senate, to show its gratitude, decreed that the name of Flora should be inscribed among the *fasti* of the state and that solemn festivals should perpetuate the memory of this courtesan's generosity. But later, the solemn honors paid a woman of evil life became a burden upon the conscience of decent folk; and so, in order to render the courtesan respectable, the idea was hit upon of apotheosizing her. Flora was, from then on, the goddess of flowers, and the *Floralia* continued to be celebrated with great pomp, in the month of April or at the beginning of May. For the celebration of these festivals, the revenues left by Flora were employed, and when these revenues were no longer sufficient, about the year 513 B. C., the fines resulting from convictions for the crime of peculation were devoted to this purpose. The festivals of Flora, which were known as those of Flora and Pomona, always kept the stigmata attaching to their founder; the magistrate sometimes suspended them, but the people renewed them when the season seemed to predict drought and a poor harvest. For six days they would crown with flowers the statues and the altars of the gods and goddesses, the doors of houses and festal chalices; they would strew with fresh grass the streets and public squares; they would indulge in imitations of the chase, pursuing hares and rabbits (*cuniculi*), which courtesans alone had the right to take alive, when they fled under the latter's robes. The aediles, who were in full charge of the *Floralia*, would toss into the crowd a shower of



beans, dried peas and other leguminous grains, which the people would fight for with their fists. This was not all: these festivals, which the courtezans looked upon as their own, gave rise to horrible carryings-on in the Circus. The courtezans would come out from their houses in a procession. Preceded by trumpets and wrapped in more than ample garments, under which they were naked and adorned with all their jewels, they would assemble in the Circus, under the eyes of the people, who thronged about them, and there they would divest themselves of their habits and display themselves in a most indecent nudity, showing complacently all that the spectators desired to see, and accompanying with infamous movements this immodest exhibition; they would run, dance, wrestle and leap like athletes and mountebanks, and each of their lascivious postures would draw cries and applause from the delirious populace. Of a sudden, men, equally nude, would burst into the arena to the sound of trumpets, and a frightful mêlée of Prostitution would take place publicly, with new transports on the part of the multitude. One day, Cato, the austere Cato, appeared in the Circus at the moment the aediles were about to give the signal for the games; but the presence of this great citizen restrained the orgy which had been about to burst forth. The courtezans remained clad, the trumpets silent, the people waiting. Some one observed to Cato that he was the only obstacle to the celebration of the games; whereupon he rose, drawing his toga over his face, and left the Circus. The people clapped their hands, the courtezans disrobed themselves, the trumpets sounded and the show was on.

We have here, certainly, the most brazen example of Prostitution that was ever carried on under the auspices of a goddess, and we understand from it that this goddess had been originally a brazen courtesan. The cult of Prostitution was more veiled in the temples of Venus. The most ancient of these temples at Rome appears to have been that of Venus Cloacina. In the early days of the republic, when they were cleaning out the great Cloaca, built by King Tarquin to carry off through the Tiber the wastes of the city, a statue was found buried in the mud; it was a statue of Venus. The question was not raised as to how it had come there, but a temple was dedicated to it under the name of Venus Cloacina. Prostitutes came to seek their fortunes in the vicinity of this temple and near the drain which was not far away; they reserved a part of their wages as an offering to the goddess, whose altar called for a perpetual influx of votive gifts. Venus had altars

more respectable and temples less frequented in the twelve regions or quarters of Rome. Venus the Placid, the Bald Venus, Venus Genetrix, or the one who engenders, Venus Verticordia, or the one who changes hearts, Venus Erycine, Venus the Victorious and other Venuses, respectable enough, lent no encouragement to Prostitution; they barely tolerated it for the sake of the priests, who gave themselves over to it in private. There were also Venuses who presided exclusively over the most secret mysteries of love. The temple of Venus Volupia, situated in the tenth quarter, drew debauchees of both sexes, who came there to seek inspiration from the goddess. The temple of Venus Salacia, or the Lascivious, whose exact situation in Rome is not known, was visited by courtezans who wished to perfect themselves in their trade. The temple of Venus Lubentia,\* or the Libertine (rather, of good will), was situated outside the walls, in the midst of a wood which lent a propitious shade to the encounters of lovers. Venus, under her different names, always made an appeal to the instincts of pleasure, if not of debauchery; but her temples at Rome, unlike those in Greece and Asia Minor, were not dishonored by an open traffic in Prostitution. There were to be found in these temples only courtezans who carried their devotion to the goddess to such an extent as to sell themselves for her profit; and in any case, the sacrifice was never accomplished on the inside of the temple, at least not unless the priest officiated at the sacrifice.

One never gets the impression from the Latin writers that the temples of Venus at Rome had colleges of consecrated priestesses, who prostituted themselves for the benefit of the altar, as was still the case at Corinth and at Eryx in the time of the Emperors. Strabo reports, in his geography, that the famous temple of Venus Erycina in Sicily was still filled with women connected with the cult of the goddess and devoted to her altars by suppliants who wished to render the goddess favorable to their vows; these consecrated slaves might redeem themselves with the money which they gained in Prostitution, of which only a part belonged to the temple that protected them. This temple fell in ruins during the reign of Tiberius, who, in his character of

\*Translator's Note:—The word was also written *Libentia* (cf. Latin *libens*, *libet*, etc.), *Libentina* and *Libitina*. There is a *Libentia*, goddess of delight, mentioned by Plautus, *Asin.* 2, 2, 2. *Libentina* was the goddess of sensual pleasure. Varro refers to the latter, as does Cicero in his *De Natura Deorum*: *lucus Veneris Lubentinae*. Varro, in his *De Lingua Latina*, gives us: "A *lubendo libido*, *libidinosus* ac *Venus Libentina* et *Libitina*. (6, 6, 63, Sect. 47, ed. Müell.)

Venus' relative, caused it to be restored and filled with new priestesses. As to the temples of Rome, they were all of one dimension, very narrow, so that the body of the edifice was only large enough to hold the altar and the statue of the goddess with the sacrificial instruments; the people did not enter the interior, and at the festivals of Venus, as in the case of the other gods, the ceremony took place in the open air, under the portico and on the steps of the sanctuary. This architectural form would seem to exclude all idea of Sacred Prostitution, at least of anything of the sort directly connected with the temple itself. The Romans, moreover, in adopting the religion of the Greeks, had refashioned it to suit their own manners, and the skeptical spirit of this people was ill adapted to acts of faith and abnegation which must, in order not to be odious and ridiculous, be surrounded with a veil of candor and of naïveté: the Romans did not believe any too much in the divinity of their gods. It is, therefore, certain that the festivals of Venus at Rome were fairly chaste or decent, that they served merely as a pretext for orgies and debaucheries of every nature, which took place in the houses. When Julius Caesar, who prided himself on being descended from Venus, gave a new impulse to the cult of his divine ancestor, he dedicated to her temples and statues on behalf of the whole Roman empire, caused solemn games to be celebrated in her honor, and directed in person the magnificent festivals which he revived, or which he established for her: the thought did not occur to him of giving new life, under these auspices, to Sacred Prostitution; he avoided also, wholly debauched as he himself was, having anything to do with the indecent personifications of Venus, who, as Lubentia, Volupia, Salacia, etc., was none other than the goddess of courtezans. One should remark, moreover, that Venus Courtezan never had a chapel at Rome.

They worshiped there, above all, Venus the Victorious, who seemed to be the great protector of the nation which had sprung from Aeneas; but they were unable to recall on what occasion it was Venus had first been adored as Venus the Armed. The latter was of Spartan and not of Roman origin, for Venus, before being the Victorious, had been the Armed. In the heroic days of Lacedæmonia, all the able-bodied men had left the city to go and besiege Messana;\* the besieged Messanians sallied forth, in turn, from their walls and made a night march in order to surprise Lacedæmonia, which had been left without defenders; but

\**Translator's Note:*—The city in the Peloponnesus, not in Sicily.

the Lacedæmonian women hastily armed themselves and went forth proudly to meet the enemy, whom they put to flight. On their side, the Spartans, advised of the danger which threatened their city, had lifted the siege of Messana and had come back to defend their firesides. They saw from afar the gleam of helmets, of breast-plates and of lances; they thought they had fallen in with the Messanians and prepared for combat; but as they drew near, the women, by way of revealing their identity, raised their tunics and revealed their sex. Ashamed of themselves, the Lacedæmonians hurled themselves with open arms upon these valiant women and did not even give them time to disarm themselves. There followed an amorous mêlée which was the origin of the cult of the armed Venus. "Venus," cries the poet of the Greek *Anthology*, "Venus, you who love to laugh and to frequent the nuptial chamber, where have you taken these warlike arms? You like gay songs, and harmonious sounds of the flute, in the company of the blond Hymen: then why these arms? Is it not enough for you to have overthrown the terrible Mars? Oh! how powerful Venus is!" Ausonius, in imitating this epigram, makes the goddess say: "If I can conquer naked, why should I bear arms?" And so, the Venus Victrix of Rome was nude, with a helmet on her head and a spear in her hand.

The public festivals of Venus were, then, much less indecent than those of Lupa and of Flora; they were voluptuous but not obscene, with the exception of the mystic episode which took place under the eyes of a small number of privileged ones, and which afterwards struck those persons to whom it was told, along with details more or less marvelous, as a prodigy of the imagination. The poet Claudian does not tell us in what temple this ingenious and amusing *tour de physique* took place. An ivory statue of the goddess, representing her as nude, was placed upon a bed of roses; to the same couch was brought, at some little distance from Venus, a statue of Mars covered with steel armor. It did not take many moments for the mystery to be accomplished; the two statues moved simultaneously and hurled themselves against each other, with so much force that it seemed they would break to splinters; but they remained tightly embraced and trembling in the midst of rose leaves. The whole secret of this mythologic scene lay in the belly of the ivory statue, which contained a lodestone, the attractive power of which acted upon the steel in the statue of Mars. But this invention must have belonged to a very



advanced stage. The first Romans dealt less artistically with their early Venuses. One of these was Venus Myrtea, so called on account of a grove of myrtle which surrounded her temple, situated in all probability near the Capitolium. The myrtle was sacred to Venus; it was employed in the purifications which preceded the nuptial ceremony. Tradition had it that the Roman ravishers of the Sabines had been crowned with myrtle as a sign of amorous victory and conjugal fidelity. Venus was similarly crowned with myrtle after having vanquished Juno and Pallas in the beauty contest. And so, myrtle crowns or wreaths were offered to all the Venuses; and wise matrons, who adored only the decent Venuses, held the myrtle in horror, as Plutarch informs us, for the reason that the myrtle was at once the emblem and provoker of sensual pleasures. Venus Myrtea took the name of Murtia, when her temple was transferred to a spot near the Circus on Mount Aventine, which was also called Murtius. Then the young virgins no longer feared to go to invoke Venus Murtia, offering her dolls and statuettes, made of terra cotta or wax, which certainly recalled, unknown to the suppliants, the ancient custom of consecrating oneself to the goddess by making to her the sacrifice of one's virginity. This sacrifice, which had been so frequent and so general in the cult of Venus, perpetuated itself still in the form of symbolism, and everywhere the brutal fact was replaced by allusions more or less transparent. Thus, when the Romans occupied Phrygia and established themselves in the Troad, which they regarded as the cradle of their race, they met there with a custom which dated back to the cult of Venus, and which had replaced the physical fact of Sacred Prostitution; the young girls, a few days before their marriage, would dedicate themselves to Venus by bathing in the river of Scamander, where the three goddesses had bathed themselves while preparing to appear before their judge, the shepherd, Paris. "Scamander," the Trojan girl who gave herself to the caressing waters of this sacred river would exclaim, "Scamander, receive my virginity!"

The cult of Venus at Rome did not call for sacrifices of the same sort; the courtezans were, however, most assiduous at the altars of the goddess, who, by the etymology of her name, appealed to everyone and everything (*quia venit ad omnia*, says Cicero, in his treatise on the Nature of the Gods; *quod ad cunctos veniat*, says Arnobius, in his book against the Gentiles). The courtezans offered her, by

preference, the signs or instruments of their profession, blond wigs, combs, mirrors, girdles, pins, slippers, whips, bells and many other objects which had to do with the secrets of their trade. They would divest themselves of their jewels and their ornaments as a gift to the goddess, who was supposed to render double payment to those who invoked her. Some, in their offerings, expressed a greater disinterestedness, and while their lovers put in an appearance with offerings not less touching: one would offer a lamp which had been a witness of his happiness, the other a torch and lever, which had assisted him in burning down and breaking in his mistress' door; the greater number brought ithyphallic lamps and votive phalli. In honor of Venus, the mother of love, there were sacrifices of she-goats and he-goats, of doves and pigeons, which the goddess had adopted as her own on account of their zeal for her cult; but if the ceremonies and the festivals of Venus did not in any way offend against modesty in the temples, they gave rise to many debauches in the houses, especially among the young debauchees and the courtezans. The most turbulent of these venereal festivals took place in the month of April, a month consecrated to the goddess of love, for the reason that all the germs of Nature are developed during this regenerative month, and the earth seems then, in a manner, to be opening its bosom to the kisses of the spring. The April nights were passed in supping, drinking, dancing, singing and celebrating the praises of Venus, in the verdant cradles and the shelters of branches interlaced with flowers. These nights were termed the *Eves of Venus*, and all the Roman youth took part in them, with all the fury of youth, while the old men and the married women locked themselves in their dwellings under the tutelary gaze of their lares, in order not to hear the joyful cries, the songs and the dances. Sometimes, on the occasion of these April festivals, but only in certain dissolute companies, there were dances and licentious pantomimes, representing the principal incidents in the life of Venus; represented in turn were the Judgment of Paris, the Fillets of Vulcan, the Loves of Adonis and other scenes from this obscene but poetic mythology; the actors who took part in these pantomimes were completely nude, and they were forced to render, by means of the most expressive dumb-show, the deeds and amorous gestures of the gods and goddesses; so that Arnobius, in speaking of these plastic divertisements, is led to remark that Venus, the mother of the sovereign people, became, upon these

occasions, a drunken Bacchante, abandoning herself to all the infamies of which courtezans are guilty (*regnatoris et populi procreatrix amans saltatur Venus, et per affectus omnes meretriciae vilitatis impudica exprimitur imitatione bacchari*). Arnobius goes on to observe, that the goddess must have blushed at viewing the horrible indecencies which were attributed to her Adonis.

The Roman women, a strange thing! so reserved with regard to the cult of Venus, made no scruple about exposing their modesty in the practice of certain cults yet more indecent and more shameful, which only had to do, however, with certain subordinate gods, and goddesses; they offered sacrifices to Cupid, to Priapus, to Priapus above all, to Mutinus, to Tutana, to Tychon, to Pertunda and to other divinities of the same order. Not only did these sacrifices and these offerings take place in the interior of the domestic dwellings, but they even took place in the public chapels, before statues erected at street corners, and in the public squares of the city. It was not the courtezans who so addressed themselves to this mysterious Olympus of sensual love; Venus, under her multiple names and varied forms, was sufficient for them; it was the matrons, it was, even, the virgins who permitted themselves the practice of these secret and impudent rites; they indulged in them only under cover, it is true, before sunrise or after sunset; but they did not tremble, they did not blush at being seen in the act of adoring Priapus and his brazen train. It may be believed, then, that they preserved the purity of their hearts despite the presence of these impure images, which displayed their monstrous obscenity everywhere, in the streets, in the gardens, and in the fields, under pretext of driving away robbers and birds. It is difficult to be precise as to the period at which the god of Lamp-sacum was introduced and popularized at Rome. His cult, which was scandalously widespread among the most respectable classes of women, does not appear to have been regulated by the fixed law of religious ceremonial. This god had not even a temple served by priests or priestesses; but his phalliphoric statues were almost as many in number as his feminine worshipers, who, under various forms, rendered this execrable deity a more or less naïve devotion. Priapus, who represents, under a human form, heavily endowed with the attributes of generation, the soul of the universe and the procreative force of matter, had only been admitted at a very late period into the Greek theogony; he made his appearance still later among the Romans,

who did not take him seriously, with his he-goat horns, his she-goat ears and his insolent emblem of virility. The Roman women, on the contrary, honored him, so to speak, with their particular protection, and did not by any means treat him as an impudent and ridiculous little god. This Priapus, whom the mythologies had made a natural son of Venus and of Bacchus, was no more than a degenerate incarnation of Mendes, or the Horus of the Egyptians, who also personified the generative principles of the world. But the Roman ladies did not look so far afield for the origin of things; their favored deity presided over the pleasures of love, the duties of marriage and all the erotic economy. It was this which distinguished him particularly from Pan, with whom he possessed more than one trait in common with regard to appearance and attributes. He was given, ordinarily, the form of a Hermes, and he was employed for the same purpose as were the boundary-stones set up in the gardens, the vineyards and the fields, which it was his duty to protect with his club or stick.

The ancient monuments have made us acquainted with the various sacrifices which Priapus received at Rome and throughout the Roman empire; he was crowned with flowers or foliage; he was enveloped in garlands; he was presented with fruits; sometimes with nuts, as an allusion to the mysteries of marriage; sometimes with apples in memory of the judgment of Paris; they burned before him, on a portable altar, the flower of wheat, chick peas and burdock; they danced, to the sounds of the lyre or the flute, about his pedestal, and they surrendered themselves, with more or less abandon, to the emotions inspired by his lubricious image. The only thing which distinguished, in these sacrifices, the respectable from the debauched women, was the veil behind which the former sheltered their modesty. Sometimes the gilded or flowering wreaths dedicated to the god of Lampsacum were not placed upon his head but were suspended from the most indecent part of the statue. *Cingemus tibi mentulam coronis!* cries a poet of the Priapians. Another poet of the same persuasion applauds a courtesan named Telethusa, who, laden with flowers and the profits of Prostitution, offered in this fashion a golden wreath to Priapus (*cingit inaurata penem tibi, sancte, corona*), to whom she gave the name of *holy*. The Priapic attribute occurs incessantly as an emblematic figure in many circumstances of private life, and the most modest glances, from force of seeing this image so multiplied, was no longer



able to look upon it with more than a casual indifference. It was sometimes a bell or a lamp or a torch or a jewel or some small article in bronze, in silver, in ivory, in horn; it was, principally, an amulet, which women and children wore about the neck to guard against maladies and philtres; it was, the same as in Egypt, the tutelary guardian of love and the auxiliary of generation. Painters and sculptors were pleased to give it wings or paws or talons to express the fact that it tore to pieces, that it walked, and that it flew away into the domain of Venus. This obscene object had, then, in a manner lost its obscene character, and the mind was almost unused to recognizing what the eyes no longer saw. But the cult of Priapus was, none the less, an occasion and an excuse for a great many secret obscenities.

This cult included, in addition, that of the god Mutinus, Mutunus or Tutunus, who did not differ from Priapus except by the position of his statues. The latter divinity was represented seated in place of standing upright; moreover, his statues, which were never numerous, were hidden in closed pavilions, surrounded by a grove which the profane were not permitted to enter. This Mutinus was a direct descendant of the ithyphallic idol of the primitive peoples of Asia; he served, also, the same purpose, and perpetuated at Rome the most ancient form of Sacred Prostitution. Young brides were conducted to this idol before being taken to their husbands, and they would seat themselves on his knees as though to offer him their virginity: *in celebratione nuptiarum*, says St. Augustine, *super Priapi scapum nova nupta sedere jubebatur*. Lactantius seems to imply that they did not content themselves with occupying this indecent seat: *Et Mutunus*, he says, *in cujus sinu pudendo nubentes praesident, ut illarum pudicitiam prior deus delibasse videatur*. This libation of virginity became sometimes an act that was real and consummated. Then, once married, those women who wished to combat sterility would return to visit the god, who would receive them once more upon his knees and render them fecund. Arnobius reports, with a shudder, the horrible details of this sacrifice: *Etiam ne Tutunus, cujus immanibus pudendis, horrentique fascino, vestras inequitare matronas et auspicabile ducitis et optatis?* We must go back to the hideous practices of the religions of India and Syria to find an analogous example of sacred Prostitution; but in the Orient, in the first ages of the world, the generative and regenerative god possessed a solemn cult, which was paid to him in the light of day, and which symbolized the fecundity of Mother Nature, whereas

at Rome, this cult, fallen into a decline, hid itself shamefully in the shadow of a chapel to which public contempt had relegated the infamous god Mutinus. This chapel had first been erected in a quarter called Velia, on the outskirts of the city; it was destroyed during the reign of Augustus, who desired to abolish the retreat; but the cult of this frightful Mutinus was so deeply rooted in the manners of the people that it was necessary to reerect his pavilion in the fields of Rome and thereby give satisfaction to young brides and sterile women, who came there in veils, not merely from all quarters of the city but also from the most remote points of Italy.

Some scholars have advanced the theory, based upon Festus' statement, that the chapel of Mutinus included, besides the statue of the god, that of his wife, Tutuna, or Mutuna, who was only there to preside over the mysteries of virginity, and who did not see anyone sitting upon the god's knees. The goddess, whose name, derived from the Greek, expressed the feminine sex and described her special character, had a posture no more decent than those of the suppliants who addressed her husband. One must not, however, confuse Mutuna with Pertunda, the hermaphroditic goddess who possessed no other sanctuary than the chamber of bridegrooms on their wedding nights. This Pertunda, whom St. Augustine proposed to call, rather, the god *Prætundus* (the one who strikes the first), was brought into the nuptial bed and there, sometimes, according to Arnobius, took upon himself a role as delicate as that of the husband: *Pertunda in cubiculis praesto est virginalem scrobem effodientibus maritis*. There was here a singular trace of Sacred Prostitution, although the goddess did not receive as a sacrifice the bride's virginity, but rather assisted the bridegroom in sacrificing it. One summoned also, on the first wedding night, another goddess and another god, equally enemies of conjugal chastity, the god *Subigus* and the goddess *Prima*: the god being charged with teaching the bridegroom his duty, the goddess with teaching the same to the bride: *ut subata asponso viro*, one reads with surprise in the *City of God* of St. Augustine, *non se commoveat, cum premitur*. As to the little gods, Tychon and Orthanes, they were but the humble appendages of the great Priapus and they did not figure at the court of Venus except as lascivious instigators to Sacred Prostitution.

We are in ignorance, nevertheless, as to who these immodest gods were, whose names we barely find cited by the obscure Lycophron and

by Diodorus Siculus; we do not even know over what particular form of pleasure they presided, and we are enabled to make no conjecture based upon evidence as to their images and their cults. It is not impossible that these gods, who are recalled to us by no figurative monument, were the same who had been introduced into Etruria in the year of Rome 566, the year 186 B. C., by a wretched Greek of low extraction, half priest and half soothsayer. These unknown gods, whose names history has not even preserved, gave rise to a cult so monstrous and mysteries so abominable that public indignation insisted upon their being branded and condemned. The women alone, at first, were devoted to the new gods and their infamous ceremonies, which attracted a great number, drawn by curiosity and love of debauchery. The men were admitted, in their turn, to the practice of this odious cult, which infected all Etruria, and which made its way to Rome. There were soon, in this city, more than seven thousand initiates of both sexes; their principal chiefs and high priests were: M. C. Attinius, of the lower class of Rome; L. Opiternius, from the country of the Falisci, and Menius Cercinius of the Campania. They termed themselves, audaciously, the founders of a new religion; but the Senate, informed of the execrable practices of this parasitic cult, proscribed it by law and ordered that all the instruments and sacred objects be destroyed, decreeing the death penalty for anyone who should labor in such a manner to corrupt the public morals. A number of priests, who gave these initiations despite the prohibition of the Senate, were arrested and underwent the supreme penalty. Nothing less than the strict enforcement of such a law as this could stop the progress of a cult which appealed to the grossest appetites of human nature. It is to be presumed that the traces of this religious debauchery were never effaced in the manners and beliefs of the lower classes of Rome.

There were, it may be, intimate analogies between this strange cult, which the Senate endeavored to wipe out, and the cult of Isis, which was equally and on many occasions the object of proscriptions on the part of the magistrates. We do not know at what period the cult of Isis was introduced at Rome for the first time; we know only that it came there disguised under an Asiatic form, quite different from its Egyptian original. In Egypt, the mysteries of Isis, the generatrix of all things, were not always chaste and irreproachable, but they represented, in the guise of allegories, the creation of the world and of human beings, the destiny of man, the quest of wisdom and the future

life of souls. Among the Romans, as in Asia, these mysteries were but pretexts and occasions for disorderly conduct of all sorts; in them, Prostitution, above all, occupied the first place. This is why the temple of the goddess at Rome was ten times demolished and ten times rebuilt; that is why the Senate only tolerated the followers of Isis because of the interested protection shown them by a few rich and powerful citizens; that is why, despite the prodigious extension of the cult of Isis under the emperors, respectable folk recoiled from it in horror and despised nothing so much as a priest of Isis. Apuleius, in his *Golden Ass*, gives us a description, greatly toned down, of these mysteries into which he had had himself initiated, and whose secret ceremonies he did not permit himself to reveal; he shows us a solemn procession, in which a priest bears in his arms the venerable effigy of the all-powerful goddess, an effigy which has in it nothing of the bird, nor the wild or domestic quadruped, and which does not any more resemble man, but which is venerable for its very strangeness, and which ingeniously characterizes the profound mysticism and the inviolable secrets with which this august religion is surrounded. Before this effigy, which was nothing else than a golden phallus, accompanied by emblems of love and fecundity, there was to be seen a throng of initiates, men and women of every age and every rank, clad in linen robes of dazzling whiteness: the women surrounding with transparent veils their hair, bedewed with perfumes; the men, shaved to the roots of their hair and waving metal sistrums. But Apuleius is prudently silent about what took place in the sanctuary of the temple, where the initiation was effected to the sound of bells and sistrums. All the writers of antiquity have preserved silence on the subject of this initiation, which must have been synonymous with Prostitution. Emperors themselves did not blush to be initiated, and to take, for the purpose, a dog's head for a mask, in honor of Anubis, the son of Isis.

It was, then, this goddess, rather than Venus, who presided over sacred Prostitution at Rome and throughout the Roman empire. She had temples and chapels everywhere at the period of the greatest depravity of manners. Her principal temple at Rome was in the Field of Mars; the adjoining estate, the gardens and the caves for initiations, must have been extensive, for the initiates who took part in solemn procession at the festivals of Isis were estimated at several thousand men and women. There went on, moreover, within the



sacred enclosure a permanent trade in debauchery, to which the priests of Isis, defiled with all vices and capable of all crimes, lent their connivance. These priests constituted a sufficiently populous college and lived under conditions of scandalous familiarity. They gave themselves to all the distractions of the senses, to all the outbursts of passion; they were always drunken and gorged with food; they promenaded the streets of the city in their linen robes, covered with stains and filth, the dog's head mask upon their faces, the sistrum in their hands; they asked alms by sounding their sistrum, and they would knock at doors, threatening with the wrath of Isis those who did not give to them. They practiced, at the same time, the shameful trade of *lenones*;\* they busied themselves, in competition with the old courtezans, in all sorts of amorous negotiations and correspondence, rendezvous, traffics and seductions. Their temple and their gardens served as an asylum to lovers, whom they protected, and to adulterers, whom they disguised under linen veils and vestments. Husbands and jealous lovers never entered with impunity these places, consecrated to pleasure, where were to be seen only amorous couples, and where nothing was to be heard but sighs, stifled by the sound of sistrums. Juvenal, in his Satires, speaks often of the habitual practices in the sanctuaries of the temples of Isis: "Quite recently," he says in his Ninth Satire, addressed to Naevolus, "you defiled regularly with your adulterous presence the sanctuary of Isis, the temple of Peace, where Ganymede has a statue, the mysterious retreat of the Good Goddess, the chapel of Ceres (for where is the temple in which women do not prostitute themselves?) and, what you do not confess, you even directed your assaults towards husbands." This double Prostitution was, then, tolerated, if not authorized and encouraged, in all the temples of Rome, especially those which had, for purposes of concealment, a nearby laurel or myrtle wood.

The cult of Isis was also associated with that of Bacchus, who was worshiped as one of the divine incarnations of Osiris. The mythology of this victorious god possessed too many points of contact with that of Venus for the god and goddess not to be honored in the same manner, that is to say, by the festivals of Prostitution. These festivals

\**Translator's Note*.—*Leno*: pimp; panderer. Our author consistently employs the Gallicized form, *lenon*, which is the stem of the Latin word, and it has been deemed best hereafter to adopt this form and, for purposes of convenience, to treat it as an English word in this translation.

were celebrated, under the name of mysteries, with frightful excesses. Libertines and courtezans were the zealous and fervent participants in them; the ones played the rôle of male, the others that of female Bacchantes; they would run all night long, half naked, with disheveled hair, girdled with vine leaves and with ivy, shaking torches and thyrsi, with cymbals, drums, trumpets and bells; while sometimes they were disguised as Fauns and went mounted upon asses. The whole of this Bacchic cult symbolized one and the same act of Prostitution: now, one drank from glass or earthen chalices in the form of a phallus; now, one hoisted enormous phalli on the ends of thyrsus-wands; the priestess of the god carried around his temple the phallus, the van and the basket, as in the processions in honor of Isis, where the three emblems represented the male nature, the female nature and the union of the two; for the cyst or mystic basket contained a serpent gnawing at its tail, while the cakes it contained were in the form of a phallus and that of a van. One may readily understand the incredible excesses which resulted from a cult wholly erotic in its nature and so dear to debauched youth. The members of the joyous band, drunken with wine, had the right to dispose of the men and women whom they encountered by chance in their nocturnal foot-races, and whom they pursued with furious cries, with mocking laughter, with obscene word and indecent gesture. Self-respecting women hid themselves with fright in their houses the moment the hour of the bacchanalia sounded; and when they heard the delirious initiates passing in front of their door, they would offer a sacrifice to their lares, invoking Juno and Modesty. In addition, Bacchus was adored as an hermaphroditic god; and in the infamous conventicles in the interior of the temple, the men became women and the women men, amid a nameless orgy, at once inspired and regulated by the sound of the sacred drum.

And all these shameful festivals which dishonored the divinities of Rome, the courtezans, faithful to a tradition the origin of which they could not explain, continued to draw a profit from their stupra and from their prostitutions; they reserved for themselves only a certain proportion of the wages of their trade, and they would deposit the rest upon the altars of the god and goddess, in case the priests themselves were not accomplices in this shameful traffic, which took place within the enclosure of the temple. "We have, today, the traffic of courtezans in the temple of Venus," says a courtezan in the *Poenulus*

of Plautus; "there the merchants of love assemble, and there it is I want to show myself."

*Ad aedem Veneris hodie est mercatus meretricius;  
Eo conveniunt mercatores, ibi ego me ostendi volo.*

Courtezans at Rome were not, as in Greece, kept at a distance from the altars; they frequented, on the contrary, all the temples, undoubtedly in the hope of finding there fortunate chances of gain; they came there, also, to show their thanks to the divinity who had been propitious to them, and they brought to his sanctuary that portion of their gain which they believed to be his due. Religion shut its eyes on this impure source of revenues and offerings; civil legislation did not concern itself with the details of this indecent devotion, which had to do with a cult; and so, thanks to this tolerance or, rather, systematic absence of judiciary control, Sacred Prostitution at Rome came near preserving its primitive attractions and physiognomy, with this difference a'ways, that it did not originate in the courtesan class, and that it had become a foreign accessory to the cult, in place of being an integral part of the cult itself.

## CHAPTER XV

LEGAL Prostitution was not established at Rome under a regular form until well after the foundation of the city, which was not at first sufficiently populous to be able to sacrifice to public debauchery the most useful portion of its inhabitants. Women had been lacking to the Romans for the purpose of forming legitimate unions, to such a degree that they had to have recourse to the rape of the Sabines; women were lacking for a long time afterward, so far as prostitutes were concerned. One might, therefore, advance with certitude the theory that legal Prostitution was introduced into the city of Romulus by foreign women, who came there to seek their fortune, and who there carried on freely their shameful industry, until the urban police judged it prudent to organize this industry and lay down laws for it. But it is impossible to assign this invasion of Roman life by the courtezans and the advent of legal Prostitution to one period rather than to another. The forceful memory which Romulus' nurse, Acca Laurentia, had left the Romans was soon hidden and effaced under the cloak of the Lupercalia; and when the beautiful Flora had revived them for a moment by attempting to bring them once more into repute, these ceremonies had been absorbed into and disguised under the form of a popular festival, the very indecencies of which no longer possessed an allegoric sense for the people who participated in them with frenzy. Magistrates and priests, moreover, were bent upon attributing the Lupercalia to the god Pan, and the Floralia to the goddess of flowers and springtime, just as though they were ashamed of the origin of these solemn feasts of Prostitution. Acca Laurentia and Flora were, then, the first prostitutes at Rome; but we should not consider their presence in the rising city as anything more than an exception, and it is perhaps by this circumstance that we must explain the considerable riches which they, one and the other, acquired at a time in which no public opposition to them existed. A learned jurist of the sixteenth century, struck by the unusual detail, has endeavored to see in Acca Laurentia and, above all, in Flora, the one official prostitute of the Roman people, resembling the queen of the bees, who alone is sufficient to her hive; and he draws from it this incredible conclusion, that a woman, in order to be brazenly and notoriously



recognized as a public prostitute, must first have abandoned herself to 23,000 men.

From the reign of Romulus, if we are content to study it in the pages of Titus Livius, marriage was instituted in such a manner as to remove all excuse for divorce and adultery; for marriage, regarded from the political point of view in the new colony, had for its principal object the attaching of citizens to their domestic firesides and the creation of a family about the bridal couple. There had been, at first, an almost absolute lack of women; then, to procure them, the chief of this colony had had recourse to ruse and violence. After this stratagem had succeeded and the Sabine women had been forced to submit, whether they liked it or not, to the husbands whom chance had given them, all the able-bodied men of Rome did not yet find themselves provided with women, and there is room to suppose that, for two or three centuries, the feminine sex was in a minority in this group of men who had come from all points of Italy, divided as it was arbitrarily into patricians and plebeians, who lived separated from each other. Marriage was, therefore, necessary in order to rally and hold to a common center passions, manners, and interests which were essentially different and disparate; marriage had to be fixed and durable in order to provide the social basis of the State; marriage, finally, repressed and condemned every sort of Prostitution; and Prostitution, accordingly, could not show its head with impunity. The facts are there to make us understand the necessity of surrounding with the most substantial guarantees the institution of marriage as Romulus had prescribed it to his people. The four laws which he enacted in favor of the Sabines, and which were engraved upon a bronze tablet in the Capitolium, are ample proof that there was, as yet, no need to fear the plague of Prostitution. The first of these laws declared that women should be the companions of their husbands, and that they should share in the latter's property and honors and in all other prerogatives; the second ordered men to give the right of way to women in public, as a mark of homage; the third prescribed that men should observe modesty in their conversation and actions in the presence of women, to such a point that they were forbidden to appear in the streets of the city except in a long robe, falling to the ankles and covering the whole body; whoever should show himself nude to the eyes of a woman (without doubt, the patrician woman is meant) might be condemned to death; finally, the fourth law specified three

cases in which a married woman might be repudiated by her husband: adultery, poisoning of the children, taking away the keys of the house; outside these three cases, the husband was not permitted to repudiate his legitimate wife under pain of losing all his goods, of which the half belonged, then, to his wife and half to the temple of Ceres. Plutarch cites, in addition, two other laws which complemented these, and which bore witness to the precautions that Romulus had taken to protect public manners and render more inviolable the marriage bond. One of these laws placed the adulterous woman at the discretion of her husband, who had the right to punish her as seemed good to him, after having called in the guilty one's relatives; the other law forbade women to drink wine under pain of being treated as adulteresses. These rigorous measures were not by any means adapted to the toleration of legal Prostitution; we must, therefore, recognize the fact, from this austere respect for decorum, that Prostitution did not yet openly exist, however much it may have been practiced in secret beyond the walls of the city, in the surrounding woods. Romulus had no need of closing the gates of his city to corruptions which found a hiding-place in the shade of forests and in the depths of rustic grottoes. His successors, inspired by his legislative thought, likewise concerned themselves with purifying manners and sanctifying marriage. Numa Pompilius established a college of Vestals and caused the temple of Vesta to be erected, where the virgins kept burning the sacred fire as an emblem of chastity. The vestals took a vow to preserve their virginity for thirty years, and those who permitted themselves to break this vow ran the risk of being buried alive; but it was not easy, at least *in flagrante delicto*, to convict them of sacrilege. As to their accomplice, whoever he may have been, he perished under the lashes inflicted upon him by the other vestals, in order to avenge their companion's honor. In the space of a thousand years, the virginity of the vestals was openly violated but eighteen times, or rather, but eighteen victims, convicted of having extinguished the sacred fire of modesty, were buried alive. Numa had desired to transform all the Roman women into vestals; for he ordered them by law to wear only long and modest habits, that is to say, ample and flowing, with veils which hid not only the bosom and throat, but even the face. The Roman lady, thus veiled, wrapped in her tunic and her linen mantle, resembled the statue of Vesta come down from its pedestal; her grave and imposing gait inspired only sentiments of veneration, as though she had been the goddess in per-

son; and if the men parted in deference to let her pass, they did not follow her with any but the most chaste glances of admiration. The tragic death of Lucretia, who could not resign herself to go on living after her modesty had been offended, is the most striking proof of the purity of manners in this period; the entire people would rise up against the author of an offense against the conjugal couch, as a protest in the name of public morality. There are numerous other evidences of the horror and contempt excited by the crime of adultery among the primitive peoples of Italy, whom Greek and Phoenician corruption had, however, already tainted. At Cumae, in the Campania, for example, when a woman had been taken in adultery, she was deprived of her garments, then led into the forum and exposed naked on a rock, where she was subjected, for a number of hours, to the insults, railleries and expectorations of the crowd; then she was placed upon an ass and led through the whole town to the accompaniment of hoots. No other chastisement was inflicted upon her, but she remained vowed to infamy; she was pointed out and called *onothatis* (she who has mounted the ass), and this nickname pursued her for the rest of her abject and miserable life.

According to certain commentators, the penalty for adultery, in Latium and the neighboring countries, originally had been more shameless and scandalous than adultery itself. The ass of Cumae also figured in this strange jurisprudence, but the rôle it played was not limited to serving as a mount to the culprit, but the latter became the public victim of the quadruped's passion.

It may be imagined what sarcasms and laughter so monstrous a scene evoked in the gross minds of the spectators. We have here a divertisement worthy of the barbaric Fauns and Aborigines, who had first peopled these savage solitudes. The unhappy woman, who had endured the approach of the ass, mangled, trampled and maltreated, was no longer a part of society, except as the latter's slave and plaything, belonging to anyone who wanted to be the ass's successor. We have here, in reality, the first prostitutes who were employed for the general use of the inhabitants of the country. Sometimes, out of decency, the obscene intervention of the ass was dispensed with; sometimes, on the contrary, they preserved an emblem of this animal which no longer retained the functions of executioner; but nevertheless, we must go back to this ancient origin for that promenade upon an ass which is to be found in the Middle Ages, not only in Italy but

in all parts of Europe to which the Roman law had penetrated. The ass represented, obviously, lust in its most brutal form, and to it were given, so to speak, the women who had lost all restraint by committing an adultery or by surrendering themselves to public debauchery. It would be impossible to say, in all cases, whether or not the ass displayed intelligence in the punishment which he was charged with inflicting. We may believe, merely, that, under circumstances sufficiently rare among the ancestors of the Romans, he bore a big bell attached to his long ears so that each of his movements might publish the shame of the condemned one. This bell was also one of the heroic attributes of the ass of Silenus, who, despite the fury of his passions, had merited the good will of Cybele for having saved the honor of this goddess. She was sleeping in an isolated grotto, and the indiscreet Zephyr was amusing himself by lifting the folds of her veil; Priapus passed by, and he had no sooner seen her than he set about to profit by the occasion; but the ass of Silenus spoiled this plan by beginning to bray. Cybele awoke and barely had time to escape the audacious designs of Priapus. Out of gratitude, she had consecrated to the service of her temple the ass which had given her so timely a warning, and she hung a bell on his ears in memory of the risk she had run; each time she heard the bell ring, she would look about her to assure herself that Priapus was not near. The latter, in revenge, had such a resentment for the ass that nothing could be more agreeable to him than the sacrifice of this animal. Priapus himself, according to a number of poets, had punished the ass by flaying him alive in order to teach him to keep still. It is true this malicious beast had renewed his braying, or had jingled his bell, in a later and analogous situation. Priapus met, in the wood, the nymph Lotis, who was sleeping like Cybele; he was preparing to take advantage of this beautiful prey, when the ass began braying and again paralyzed his wicked intentions. The nymph showed rancor toward the ass rather than toward Priapus. The Romans, without doubt, had been influenced by the nymph, Lotis, for they had a hatred and almost a horror of the ass, and a mere meeting with one impressed them as being an evil omen.

After the ass had been successively deprived of his old prerogatives in the punishment of adulteresses, one could but give him a biped substitute and, sometimes, more than one at once; but the use of the bell was respected as a memento of the ancient penalty. It was undoubtedly custom rather than law which had established this singular



method of punishment for the guilty of low condition; for it would be difficult to suppose that the patricians, even to avenge their personal injuries, would have placed themselves at the mercy of plebeian insolence. There were, in various quarters of Rome, those most segregated from the center of the city and probably near the conventicles of Priapus, certain places where adulterous women were exposed to the outrages of the first comer. These places were a sort of prison, lighted by narrow windows and closed with a strong door; under a low roof, a bed of stone, furnished with straw, waited for the victims, who were forced to enter backward this ignominious hole; outside, asses' heads, carved in relief on the wall, announced that the ass still presided over the obscene mysteries of which this vault was a witness. A bell-tower surmounted the dome of this edifice, which was, perhaps, the origin of the pillory of modern times. When a woman had been taken in a flagrant act of adultery, she belonged to the people, whether the husband had abandoned her or the judge had condemned her to public Prostitution. She was carried away in the midst of laughter, insults and the most obscene jests; no ransom could redeem her; no prayer, no effort could rescue her from this horrible treatment. When she had arrived, half naked, at the scene of her shame, the door would close behind her, and a lottery would then be set up, with dice, or numbered pieces of bone, which assigned to each of the legal executors the turn he was to take in this abominable execution. Each in turn entered the little cell, and at once a throng of curious ones would run to the bars of the windows to enjoy the hideous spectacle, which was proclaimed by the sounding of the bell, to the applause or the hisses of the populace. Each time a new athlete appeared in the arena, laughter and outcries would burst from all sides, and the ringing of the bell would commence again. If we take the word of Socrates the Scholastic, this odious Prostitution was in full force throughout the Roman empire, down to the fifth century of the Christian era. The original ass no longer existed, except figuratively, in the disorderly practices that accompanied the infliction of such a penalty, but the people remembered the ass and tried to bray like him while this infamous debauch was taking place, a debauch which frequently ended in the victim's death and with the sacrifice of an ass upon the neighboring altar of Priapus. Nevertheless, it is probable that the Romans did not despise, as much as they appeared to do, this animal the name of which, *onos*, designated the worst throw at dice; sometimes, a lover,

a young bridegroom, would suspend from the columns of his bed an ass's head and a vine-stock in order to celebrate the exploits of an amorous night or as a preparation for those which were projected; the ass bore offerings to the temple of the chaste Vesta; the ass walked proudly in the festivals of Bacchus, and, as a celebrated epigram tells us, if Priapus had taken an aversion to the ass, it was because he was jealous.

If the punishment for adultery was different among the patricians from what it was among the plebeians, it was for the reason marriage also differed with the two classes. Romulus, who was a legislator as sage as he was austere, despite the rape of the Sabines, had desired to make of marriage a patrician institution, so to speak; for he regarded it as indispensable in preserving the families of the hereditary aristocracy. This marriage, the only one with which the legislator was at first concerned, was called *confarreatio*, for the reason that the bridal couple, during the religious ceremonies, were in the habit of sharing a loaf of wheat bread (*panis farreus*), which they ate simultaneously as a sign of union. In order to be admitted to such an alliance, which carried with it the right to various privileges, it was necessary that the couple should first have been recognized as belonging to the patrician class and have been admitted, consequently, to interrogating the auspices, which concerned only the nobility. It was certainly Romulus who established that rule which the Decemvirs incorporated, three centuries later, in the laws of the Twelve Tables: "It shall not be permitted to patricians to contract marriage with plebeians." The latter, offended by this exclusion, protested for a long time, before the exclusion had become a part of the civil code. This marriage by *confarreatio* appeared to be the only legitimate, or, at least, the only respectable one, since it placed the woman, in a manner, upon a pedestal of equality with her husband, by making her a participant in all the civil rights which the latter enjoyed, so that this woman, honored with the title of *mother of a family* (*mater familias*), was able to inherit from her husband and from her children. The condition of the mother of a family presented no analogy with the servitude which awaited the plebeian's spouse (*uxor*) under the form of marriage by *coëmption* and by *usucapio*. These were the two distinct forms of legal marriage among the plebeians. The word, *coëmption*, carries with sufficient clearness an allusion to a purchase and sale. The woman, in order to be married thus, arrived at the altar with three *as* (a piece of bronze

money equivalent to a sou in our currency) in her hand; she would give one to the husband whom she took in the presence of gods and men, but she kept the other two, as though to let it be understood that she was redeeming but a third of her slavery, and that marriage only partly enfranchised her. Other jurists have assumed that, by this symbol of a bargain concluded between the contracting parties, the woman purchased the care and protection of her husband. This marriage was looked upon as being as legitimate for plebeians as that by *confarreatio* was for the patricians, although the *uxor* did not possess the same prerogatives and the same rights as a *mater familias*. As to the third form of marriage, called *usucapio*, this was in reality nothing more than legalized concubinage; for this marriage, it was necessary that the woman, with the consent of her natural guardians, should dwell in a marital state for an entire year, without sleeping out of the house more than three nights in succession, with a man whom she had thus taken as a trial husband. This concubine-marriage which was only established at Rome by force of custom, was sanctioned by the law of the Twelve Tables and became a civil institution like the other variety of marriage.

The population of Rome, made up of the inhabitants of different countries with different customs, languages and manners, would, no doubt, have been only too much inclined to live without restraint and without law, in the midst of the most shameful disorder, if Romulus, Numa and Servius Tullius had not created a legislation in which marriage served as the foundation and support of Roman society. But inasmuch as these kings only concerned themselves with the patricians, the plebeian supplied the silence of the legislator in his regard by framing for himself customs which took the place of laws, until these became laws, accepted by the consuls and the Senate. And so, it may be supposed that the marriage of the patricians and the plebeians was preceded by concubinage and by Prostitution, after foreign women had come to seek their fortune in a city where men were in the majority, and after the continual wars of Rome with its neighbors had brought within its walls many women prisoners, who remained as slaves or who became wives. In any case, law and custom equally gave the husband supreme power with respect to his wife; if the latter caught her husband in open adultery, she, as Cato remarked, did not dare even to touch him with the end of her finger (*illa te, si adulterares, digito non contingere auderet*), while she might be killed with impunity,

if her husband found her in an analogous situation. The plebeians never possessed, in this respect, the benefit of the law; but the patricians, for whom marriage was a very serious thing, often executed justice themselves; they had, it may be seen, other ideas than the people on the question of Prostitution, and it may be concluded that, in the first centuries of Rome, they had lived more chastely and more conjugally than the plebeians, who only married, it may be, to imitate the patricians and to achieve some sort of equality with the latter. The married woman, mother of a family or a wife, had not the right to demand a divorce except on the ground of adultery; but the husband, on the other hand, might obtain a divorce under any one of the three circumstances which Romulus had taken care to distinguish: adultery, poisoning the children, and taking away the keys of the strong box, as a sign of domestic theft. The woman had, moreover, no more rights over her children than over her husband; but the latter possessed over his offspring the right of life and death, and might sell them as many as three times. This power of the father only existed with regard to legitimate children, which is enough to show us that the children who were the issue of Prostitution enjoyed neither the guardianship nor the recognition of the State, but were relegated to the ranks of the vile multitude, along with slaves and actors.

It was not of natural children that Rome had need; she took little account of those poor victims who were unable to point out their father and who blushed at their mother's name; she wanted citizens, and she demanded them as the result of a regularly contracted marriage.\* An old law, of which Cicero speaks, forbade a Roman citizen to remain a celibate beyond a certain age, which in all probability did not exceed thirty years. When a patrician appeared before the tribunal of the censors, the latter addressed to him this question before any other: "On your soul and conscience, have you a horse? Have you a wife?" Those who were unable to respond in a satisfactory manner were subject to a fine and thrown out of court, until they should have acquired a horse and a wife. The censors, who demanded this double civic status of a patrician, sometimes permitted him to be content with one or the other; for the horse indicated war-like habits, the wife those of a more pacific nature. "I know how to ride a horse," said Bibius Casca, interrogated by a censor who often had reproved him for his obstinate celibacy; "but how could I learn to ride a

\**Translator's Note*.—Much the same is true in contemporary Fascist Italy.



woman?" . . . "I confess she is a more restive animal," replied the censor, who intended by that, however, merely a joke. "It is marriage which will teach you this sort of equitation." . . . "I shall get married then," replied Casca, "when the Roman people will furnish me the bit and the bride." This censor, who was named Metullus Numiadicus, was not himself any too convinced of the merits of that institution which he recommended to others; one day, he began a speech in the Senate with these words: "Roman knights, if it were possible for us to live without women, we would be able to spare ourselves, and right willingly too, all this foolish trouble; but since Nature has disposed things in such a fashion that we cannot live without them nor live agreeably with them, reason dictates that we should prefer the public interest to our own happiness." The censors, who had jurisdiction over marriages, were charged, in the presence of the aediles, with keeping a watch over public Prostitution.

Servius Tullius had ordered each inhabitant of Rome to have inscribed upon the registers of the censors his name, his age, the rank of his father and mother, the names of his wife and children and a census of all his property; whoever dared avoid this registration was subject to being beaten with rods and sold as a slave.

The tables of the censors were preserved in the archives of the republic near the temple of Liberty, on the Aventine. It was by means of these tables, renewed every five years, that the censors were enabled to keep account of the movement and progress of the population; they were enabled, thereby, to judge of the number of births and marriages, but they had no means of determining, otherwise, the progress of Prostitution, since women did not appear before them, being represented only by their fathers, their husbands or their children. There is a great likelihood, therefore, that the prostitutes at first practised their trade freely, beyond reach even of police regulations; for they escaped the necessity of registration, at least for the most part, and they had no need of having their status officially established by the republic. It is impossible to say at what period Roman law distinguished for the first time the free woman (*ingenua*) from the prostitute and fixed, in a precise manner, the status of courtezans. There is room to believe that these degraded creatures were, in a manner, beyond the law for a number of centuries, as though legislators did not deign to do them the honor even of naming them; for if they figure here and there in the history of Rome they are not named in the laws

down to the reign of Augustus, when the Julian law branded them, and it is not till more than a century after the enactment of this memorable law that the jurisconsult par excellence, Ulpianus, defines Prostitution and its infamous accessories. This definition, although dating from the second century, may be considered, nevertheless, as a resumé of the opinions of all the barristers who had preceded Ulpianus. Here is what the latter gives, under the title *De ritu nuptiarum*, in the twenty-third book of his work: "A woman makes a public commerce of Prostitution, not only when she prostitutes herself in a place of debauchery, but also when she frequents the wine-shops or other places in which she does not take the proper care of her honor. 1. By a *public commerce* is to be understood the trade of those women who prostitute themselves to all comers and without choice (*sine delectu*).<sup>\*</sup> Thus, this term does not apply to married women who are guilty of adultery, nor to girls who permit themselves to be seduced; by it is meant prostituted women. 2. A woman who has abandoned herself for money to one or two persons is not to be regarded as having made a public commerce of Prostitution. 3. Octavenus holds, with reason, that she who prostitutes herself publicly, even without accepting money, should be included in the number of women who make a public trade of Prostitution."

This definition certainly sums up, with a great deal of clarity, the motives of the most ancient Roman laws relative to Prostitution; and while we are not in possession of these laws, it is easy to form an idea of the spirit which dictated them. Prostitution, moreover, was of different sorts and, so to speak, of different degrees, which, undoubtedly, had been distinguished and classified in the codes of jurisprudence. Thus, *quaestus* represented the wandering prostitute who solicited her trade. *Scortatio* represented stationary Prostitution, which waited for its clientele and received it at a fixed place. As to the act of Prostitution itself, it was adultery with a married woman; *stuprum* was the commission of the act with a respectable woman, who, as a result, was degraded. *Fornicatio* was the commission of the act with an immodest woman, who suffered no prejudice as a result. There was, besides, the *lenocinium*, that is to say, the more or less direct traffic in Prostitution, the more or less complacent mediation of brazen and unblushing speculators; in a word, the assistance and provocation of

<sup>\*</sup>*Translator's Note*.—This "emotional indifference," to employ the modern sociologist's phrase, is the core of the modern definition of Prostitution.

all sorts of debauchery. This was one of the most contemptible forms of Prostitution, and the barrister did not hesitate to describe as *prostittutes* those vile and abject creatures who made a trade of exciting and inciting to Prostitution, by means of evil counsel or perfidious seductions, the blind and imprudent victims whose shame and dishonor they exploited at half rate. The law covered with the same contempt the men and the women, *lenae*, *lenones*, who made a business of these scandalous negotiations; but the law did not interfere with their industry by thus classing them with the men and women who trafficked in their own bodies. In the class *de meretricibus*, were included not only the male and female entrepreneurs, who kept open house to debauchery, and who took a toll from the Prostitution which they stimulated, either by giving their slaves to it or by luring into it persons of free condition (*ingenuae*), but also the hostlers, the wine-shop-proprietors and the bathhouse-keepers, who had domestics of either sex in their service, and who devoted these domestics to public debauchery, the master of the place seeing to it that Prostitution redounded to his own profit, becoming thus an accomplice, whatever his ostensible profession might otherwise be, and incurring the full burden of infamy the same as the wretched objects of his commerce.

The brand of infamy, which was borne in common by all the agents and intermediaries of Prostitution, along with condemned men, slaves, gladiators and actors, brought civil death to those whom it touched by the sole fact of their profession; these did not enjoy the possession of their goods; they were not able to testify or to inherit; they were deprived of the guardianship of their children; they might not occupy any public position; they were not even permitted to make an accusation in court, to give testimony or to take an oath before any tribunal whatsoever; they were only permitted, out of tolerance, to attend the solemn festivals of the great gods; they were exposed to all insults, to every variety of ill treatment, without being authorized to defend themselves or even to lodge a complaint; in short, the magistrates possessed, very nearly, the right of life and death over these infamous wretches. Whoever was once branded with infamy was never able to wash himself clean of this indelible stain; "for," said the law, "turpitude is not abolished by remission." The law accepted no excuse which might free from this social degradation the man or the woman who had merited it. Clandestine Prostitution was, no more than public Prostitution, sheltered by ignominy; poverty and necessity were

not even an excuse in the eyes of the law, which was satisfied with the fact, without taking into account motives and circumstances. The fact alone constituted infamy, for there was always a sufficient reason for seeking proof and establishment of the fact, even in a very distant past. Thus, there was no mitigating circumstance which might be invoked against the fact that implied infamy. Once infamy had existed, no matter when or in what place, it still existed, it would always exist; nothing could efface it, nothing could attenuate it. A slave, who had boarded girls, and who had grown rich from the product of their Prostitution, kept, even after his enfranchisement, the brand of infamy. Ulpianus and Pomponius cite this remarkable example of the weakness of infamy in the face of Roman jurisprudence. But, on the other hand, the girls who had been prostituted by this slave, and for his profit, during their servitude, were not branded with infamy, despite the trade which they had practiced, on the ground that they had been constrained and forced to do so. It is the Emperor Septimus Severus, who formulates this ruling, reported by Ulpianus. Nevertheless, especially under the emperors, the brand of infamy did not restrain women of free condition, and even of noble extraction, from devoting themselves to Prostitution, with the authorization of the aediles—what was known in this case, as the *licentia stupri*, or the license to commit debauchery.

The laws of the emperors had, then, for object, the prevention of Prostitution from spreading and taking root among the patrician classes. Augustus, Tiberius, Domitian himself were equally jealous in preserving intact the honor of the Roman blood and in protecting, by means of rigid proscriptions, the integrity and the sanctity of marriage, which they regarded as a fundamental law of the republic. They themselves did not hesitate to conform to these legal rules which they imposed on the public. In all this body of jurisprudence, so complex and so minute, against adultery, Prostitution is incessantly placed on trial, and constantly with an excessive rigor which is evidence of the effort of the legislators to repress it, even when the emperor was himself affording an example of all the vices. The Julian law prescribed that a senator, his son, or his grandson should not be betrothed to or espouse, openly or fraudulently, a woman whose father or whose mother was, or had been, a comedian, a *meretrrix* or a panderer; similarly, he whose father or mother had carried on the same infamous trade could not be betrothed to, or wed, the daughter or



granddaughter or great-granddaughter of a senator. But since those persons whom the law declared infamous would sometimes seek to reëstablish their status by invoking the name and noble birth of their parents, a decree of the Senate absolutely forbade Prostitution to women whose father, grandfather or husband belonged, or had belonged, to the order of Roman knights. Tiberius sanctions this decree by exiling a number of Roman ladies, among others Vestilia, daughter of a senator, who had devoted themselves, out of a spirit of lust rather than from avarice, to popular Prostitution. Many patrician and plebeian women, in order to escape the terrible consequences of the law against adultery, had sought a refuge which they believed to be inviolable, under the cloak of Prostitution; for in the days of the republic, it was sufficient for a matron to declare herself a courtesan (*meretrix*), and to cause herself to be so described on the registers of the aediles, in order to place herself beyond the law pertaining to adulteresses. But new measures were taken to stop this scandal and to annul its pernicious effects; the Senate declared that every matron who had carried on an infamous trade, in the character of a comedian, a courtesan or a procuress, in order to escape chastisement as an adulteress, should be, nevertheless, pursued and condemned by virtue of senatorial decree. The husband was invited to pursue his adulterous wife even into the lairs of Prostitution and infamy; all those who had lent a hand wittingly to this Prostitution, the proprietor of the house in which it had taken place, the lenon who had profited by it, the husband himself who had taken pay for the dishonor done him, all might equally be pursued and punished as adulterers. What was more, the proprietor or tenant of a bath, of a wine-shop, or even of a field in which the crime had been committed, would find himself accused of complicity; even if the crime had not been committed on those premises, one might still hunt down, with the same rigor, the persons judged to have arranged, winked at and facilitated the adultery, by furnishing the guilty parties not only a place, but also the means of meeting for illicit interviews. The magistrates pushed as far as possible the application of the law, as though to provide an antidote for the outbreak of adulteries and crimes which was dragging the Roman Empire to its ruin. Women were to be seen, adulteresses in the interval between a first and second marriage, remarrying again and meeting suddenly with an accuser who came, in the name of a dead husband, to dishonor and punish them in the arms of their new spouse.

It was only the widow, even though she was the mother of a family, who might give herself with impunity to Prostitution, without fearing any persecution, even on the part of her children.

Jurisprudence, it may be seen, did not concern itself with Prostitution, except from the point of view of adultery and in the interests of marriage; it left, otherwise, to police regulation, embodying the decision of the censors and the aediles, the government of courtezans and those depraved beings who lived at their expense. It was, particularly, the Prostitution of married women and the odious *lenocinium* of husbands which the Senate and the emperors endeavored to combat and to suppress. The law, in the first place, imposed an equal restraint upon women of all conditions, provided they had not been infamous; but later it was restricted to matrons and to mothers of families, after adultery, in most of the patrician houses, had been peacefully established under the auspices of the husband, who unworthily exploited his wife's virtue. The institution of marriage, which legislation was designed to safeguard, was more than ever compromised as the result of the turpitudes which were unveiled in the course of justice. At times, the woman shared with her husband the wage earned by her adultery; at other times, the husband insisted upon being paid for conniving with his wife. In any case, the danger connected with adultery almost always added one more attraction to Prostitution. But if the man who had committed an act of adultery was able to prove that he did not know in advance he was having an affair with a married woman, he was dismissed from court, as though his advances had been made to a simple prostitute. Care was taken, on one side and the other, to arrange for certain subterfuges and to be on guard against the rigors of the law. As a consequence, matrons in search of adventure dressed themselves as slave girls and even as prostitutes; thus disguised, they made advances in the street to passers-by whom they did not know, or placed themselves in the path of their lovers whom they pretended to have met by chance. Thanks to their disguise, which exposed them to free speech, to impudent glances and sometimes even to daring caresses on the part of the first comer, they might seek their fortune upon the promenades, in the suburbs and along the Tiber, without compromising anyone, either their husbands or their lovers. But by showing themselves in other garb than that of a matron, they abandoned all claim to sympathy for the insults which they might receive as a result of their slave or prostitute's costume.

For there was a very severe penalty against those who annoyed a woman or a girl clad as a matron or a virgin, whether the annoyance was by indecent gestures, by obscene remarks or by a silent pursuit. The law only accorded protection to respectable women and did not suppose that the modesty of prostitutes had any need of being protected against affronts which courtezans ordinarily sought out, in place of repelling.

The rigor of the law, with its penalties against adultery, did not render adultery less frequent or more secret; but marriage, surrounded thus with perils and suspicions, could only appear more redoubtable and less attractive. There was visible a considerable diminution in the number of unions, approved and legally recognized, all the more because of the fact that consanguinity, even in remote degrees, created certain obstacles which might, when the marriage had been accomplished, provide permanent causes of divorce. It was then that the patricians, who had no desire to expose themselves to these annoyances and dangers, made use, for their own convenience, of marriage under the form of *usucapio*, which had not been in vogue up to that time except among the lower classes; the patricians changed it somewhat in order to make of it a *concubinage*, which a law, as vague as the condition itself, admitted and recognized as an institution. It was no longer necessary, as in the *usucapio*, for the woman to cohabit under the same roof for a year in order to have the marriage pronounced definitive; concubinage could not achieve that result in any case, since it only existed by the will of the two parties; it had, moreover, no special manifestation, no general character, except that a woman known as *ingenua* and *honesta*, or of patrician blood, might not become a concubine, and that consanguinity was an obstacle to concubinage, as it was to marriage. A man who had been legitimately married, whether or not he was separated from his wife, found himself, by that fact alone, unfitted to contract a liaison with a concubine; and in any case, the celibate or the widower was not authorized to take two concubines at the same time. As to changing them, he was always free to do that, but only by advising the magistrate before whom he had declared his intention of living in concubinage. It was thus, in a manner, a semi-marriage, a temporary contract, subject to the fancy of one of the contracting parties. At the beginning of concubinage, the concubine had the right to almost the same regard as the legitimate bride; she was even given the title of matron, at least under cer-

tain circumstances, and the Julian law punished an outrage done to a concubine as gravely as if it concerned an *ingenua*, or girl of free condition, even though this concubine was a slave by birth; but as a result of the corruption of manners, concubinage multiplied in an alarming fashion, and it became necessary for the law to impose rules and limitations on it; concubines were then shorn of the legal protection which they had at first enjoyed, and the Emperor Aurelian ordered that they be taken only from among slaves or freed women. From this moment, concubinage became no more than a domestic Prostitution, dependent only on the whim of the male and offering not the least guaranty to the woman. At all times, the children born of a concubine remained none-the-less fitted for legitimization, whereas those born of Prostitution, properly so called, or of a passing intercourse, the ones known as *spurci* or *quaesiti*, as well as those born of a prohibited union, were never favored with a legitimization which effaced the stain of their origin.

Legal Prostitution, under all its forms and under all its names (it was the same with concubines), was then tolerated at Rome and in the Roman Empire, provided it submitted to the various regulations of the urban police, and, above all, to the payment of the graduated tax (*vectigal*) which it owed to the State. But it is probable that, apart from these regulations and this tax, the old Roman legislation did not deign to concern itself with that infamous class which lived by public debauchery and which satisfied the public's shameful needs. A curious fact proves the indifference and the disdain of the legislator and the magistrate for all these wretched agents of Prostitution. Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer, who was consul sixty years before Christ, refused, during his tenure of office, to recognize the rights of succession which had been invoked by one Vetibius, branded with infamy as a lenon; the praetor explained his refusal by saying that the lupanar had nothing in common with the civic fireside, and that the unfortunate ones whom the practice of *lenocinium* had stigmatized were unworthy of the protection of the laws (*legum auxilio indignos*). One might, also, in a very explicit passage of Cicero's plea for Caelius, find proof of the absolute tolerance which had grown up around the practice of Prostitution: "To forbid youth all love of courtezans would be in accordance with the principles of an austere virtue, I cannot deny; but these principles are little in accord with the relaxation of morals in this century, or even with the tolerant customs of our ancestors; for in



short, when have such passions as these not held sway? when have they been forbidden? when have they not been tolerated? and when has it happened that that which is permitted was not done?" It may be seen, thus, that Prostitution was permitted; the civil law did not prohibit it except in certain exceptional cases, thus limiting itself to preventing its abuse; it was only public morality and philosophy which were charged with correcting manners and stopping debauchery. But as Cicero gives us to understand, philosophy and public morality were equally indulgent toward bad habits rendered almost respectable by their ancient origin. The Romans of all periods were too jealous of their liberty to submit to any restraints or contradictions in the individual employment of that liberty; they, in a manner and in their own eyes, justified Prostitution, of which they made a large use; they merely demanded that the prostitutes should be slaves or freed women, for the reason that they considered prostitution a degrading form of slavery. That is why men and the women free by birth lost this sacred character in the eyes of the law as soon as they had placed themselves in any manner at the service of Prostitution.

If the Romans tolerated so complacently the natural intercourse of the two sexes, they did not, thereby, impede that intercourse against nature which the Fauns of Latium would have invented, if it had not been, from the first centuries, widespread and authorized throughout the world. This shameful depravity, which the civil and religious laws of antiquity, with the exception of those of Moses, had not even thought of combating, was never more general than in the best period of Roman civilization. It was, in the eyes of the legislator, a tolerated form of Prostitution or of slavery; the men known as *ingenui* or free born, were not, therefore, to submit to it; as to slaves, freed men and foreigners, they might dispose of themselves, by rent or sale, without the law taking any cognizance of the conditions; as to citizens, or the *ingenui*, they purchased or hired at pleasure what seemed good to them without the nature of the bargain being subject to legal inquiry; the ones acted as free men, the others as slaves; the latter endured Prostitution, the former imposed it. But among free men, things were otherwise, and the law, guardian of the liberty of all, sometimes intervened to punish an affront to the liberty of a citizen. Such was, at any rate, the legal fiction; in this circumstance alone, a citizen had no right to alienate his own liberty by submitting himself to an act which was an outrage to that liberty. Thus, in the fifth century of the found-

ing of Rome, L. Papyrius, taken in a flagrant dereliction with the young Publius, was condemned to prison and a fine for not having respected the character and the person of an *ingenuus*; a short while afterward, the same C. Publius was punished in his turn for a similar offense. The people did not suffer citizens to conduct themselves as slaves. Laetorius Mergus, a military tribune, brought before the assembly of the people for having been taken with one of the *cornicularii*, or brigadiers of his legion, was unanimously condemned to prison. The violation of a man was looked upon as even more culpable than that of a woman, because there was thought to be in it more of violence and perversity; but this species of rape did not carry with it the death-penalty, unless it had been committed upon a free man. A centurion named Cornelius, perpetrator of a rape of this nature, was executed in the presence of the army. This penalty was not, however, applied by virtue of a special law until near the time of the second Punic war, when a certain Caius Scantinius was accused by C. Metellus of having attempted to commit rape on the patrician's son. The senate then promulgated a law against pederasts, under the name of the *lex scantinia*; but there was no question, so far as this law was concerned, except of affronts committed against free-born citizens, and no other restraints were placed upon this species of Prostitution, which remained the privilege of slaves and freed men.

Such was, among the Romans, the only jurisprudence to which Prostitution had given birth, down to the time when Christian morality introduced a new legislation into paganism, clearing and purifying the latter. Under the sway of pagan ideas, Prostitution had existed in a state of tolerance, and the law did not even deign to lift the veil which concealed it from the eyes of the public conscience; but as soon as the Gospel had entered upon the reform of manners, the Christian legislator began to recognize the fact that legal Prostitution was a thing to be repressed.\*

\**Translator's Note*:—Repression, not supression, is meant. It was not until toward the beginning of the present century that the movement for the abolition of Prostitution arose.

## CHAPTER XVI

**P**UBLIC women at Rome, at least in the Rome which had been corrupted and whose moral fibre had been relaxed by the importation of customs from Greece and Asia, were more numerous than they had ever been at Athens or even at Corinth; they were also divided into a number of classes, which had nothing in common except the object of their reprehensible industry; but among these different classes of courtezans, who had come from all the different countries in the world, one might have sought in vain for those Queens of Prostitution, those hetairai, as remarkable for their minds and education as for their beauty and their graces, those philosophs, educated in the schools of Sophocles and of Epicurus, those Aspasia, those Leontiums, who had, in a manner, redeemed and glorified Greek hetairism. The Romans were more material, if not more sensual than the Greeks; they were not content with the refinements and delicacies of an elegant pleasure; they did not nourish their hearts with the illusion of Platonic love; they would have blushed to hitch themselves to the literary chariot of a female philosopher or a muse; they would not have deigned to seek with a woman of pleasure the chaste distractions of intellectual conversation. For them, pleasure consisted in the grossest acts, and since they were naturally of an ardent nature, endowed with a lubricious imagination and a Herculean constitution, they looked for nothing except tangible pleasures, repeated to the point of satiety and monstrously varied. This temperament, indicated by the thickness of their necks, which were like those of bulls, found itself served at will by a throng of mercenaries of either sex, who bore names peculiar to their habits, their costumes, their retreats and the features of their profession.

All the women who made a traffic of their bodies at Rome might be put into two essentially distinct classes, the whores (*meretrices*) and the prostitutes (*prostibulae*).\* By *meretrices* was meant those who did

\**Translator's Note:*—A distinction that is rather difficult to bring out in English. Mr. J. U. Nicolson calls my attention to a report of the Chicago Vice Commission of some years ago, in which a distinction was made between out-and-out prostitutes and the clandestine variety (shop-girls, etc.), representing what the sociologist terms *occasional Prostitution*.

not work except at night; by *prostibulae* those who gave night and day to their infamous labor. Nonius Marcellus, a grammarian of the third century, in his book on the *Differences in the Signification of Words*, established this distinction, which was to the advantage of the *meretrices*: "The difference must be remarked between a whore and a prostitute, that the former practises her profession in a more decent manner, for the *meretrices* are so named from the word *merenda* (evening meal), because they do not dispose of themselves except at night. The *prostibula* draws her name from the fact that she stands in front of her *stabulum* (resort) in order to carry on her commerce by night and by day." Plautus, in his comedy of the *Cistellaria*, establishes this distinction very clearly: "I go to the house of a good *meretrix*; for to stand in the streets is the act of a prostitute." We may infer that these two kinds of public women, those who only were so at night and those who were so at every hour of the day and night, must have possessed still other notable differences in their manner of life, in their clothes and even in their social condition; thus, the Latin writers who make mention of the registers on which the aediles inscribed the names of courtezans, speak only of *meretrices*, and seem designedly to have failed to mention the *prostibulae*. The latter, as a matter of fact, occupied a fixed domicile and merely had to change their name and costume, since they belonged to the lowest class of plebeians. The *meretrices*, on the contrary, practised as honorably as possible their indecent trade and did not violate the regulations of the police; they might, moreover, live as good women, *sub sole*, until the hour when, covered by the protecting shadows of night, they went to the lupanars, which they did not leave until the first streaks of dawn. It is probable, also, that the good *meretrix*, as Plautus calls her, with a naïveté which the learned M. Naudet has been careful to preserve in his translation, paid in very punctiliously her tax to the State, and that she did not endeavor, by disguising her profession, to filch a single denier from the republic. But all the workers in Prostitution were not so conscientious, and it may be supposed that the greater number, the poorest, the most abject, made no scruple of avoiding registration with the aedile and, as a consequence, the payment of an immodesty tax. These unfortunate ones, the fact is, the same as the prostitutes of the lowest class, did not earn enough for themselves to be able to save the least part of their income for the public treasury.

The *alicariae*, or bakers, were women of the street who waited for



fortune at the doors of bakeries, especially those which sold certain cakes, made of fine flour, without salt or leaven, and destined for offerings to Venus, Isis, Priapus and the other gods and goddesses. These breads, called *coliphia* and *siligones*, represented, under the most whimsical forms, the organ of the woman and that of the man. Since there was an enormous demand for these Priapic and venereal breads, especially on the occasion of certain festivals, the master-bakers erected tents and opened shops in the public squares and on the street corners; they sold nothing but sacrificial breads, but at the same time, they had slave girls or servant maids, who prostituted themselves day and night in the bakery. Plautus, in his *Poenulus*, has not forgotten these good friends of the journeymen: *Prosedas, pistorum amicas, reliquas alicarias*. The *bliteae* or *blitidae* were women of the vilest sort, who had been so brutalized by wine and debauchery that they were no longer worth anything for the trade which they still plied amid the fields; their name was derived from *blitum*, *blite*, a species of white beet, insipid and nauseous. Suidas does not disagree with this etymology, when he says: "They give the name of *blitidae* to those vile, abject, and idiotic women." (*Viles, abjectas, fatuasque mulieres vocabant blitidas*.) According to other philologists, this nickname was applied to courtezans in general for the reason that they frequently wore green slippers of the color of smallage. It was a serious insult to refer to a decent woman as a *blitum*. The *bustuariae* were women of the cemeteries; they wandered day and night among the tombs (*busta*) and the pyres; they sometimes acted as mourners for the dead, and they especially provided recreation for the *bustuarii*, who prepared the pyres and burned the bodies, for the grave diggers who dug the graves and the *colombarii* who guarded the sepulchres; they had no other bed than the lawn which surrounded the funeral monuments, no other bed-curtain than the shadow of these monuments, no other Venus than Proserpine. The *casalides*, or *casorides*, or *casoritae*, were prostitutes who dwelt in the little houses (*casae*) from which they had taken their nickname; this name signified also the same thing in Greek, *Rasaura* or *Rasoris*. The *copae* or *wine-shop girls* were women of the taverns and the hostleries; they were not always seated at the entrance of their ordinary dwelling; sometimes they poured wine for passers-by who stopped to refresh themselves; sometimes they showed themselves at the windows to attract customers; sometimes they made the latter a sign to enter; sometimes they remained in retirement in a low

and secluded room. The *diobolares* or the *diobolæ* were wretched women, most of them old, emaciated and bent, who never asked more than two oboles, as their name indicated. Plautus, in his *Poenulus*, says that the Prostitution of the *diobolares* was confined to the lowest slaves and the vilest men (*servulorum sordidulorum scorta diobolaria*). Pacuvius describes this Prostitution by saying that the *diobolares* had no refusal to make the one who offered them the smallest piece of money (*nummi causâ parvi*). The *forariae*, or *foreign women*, were those who came from the country to prostitute themselves in the city, and who, with dusty feet and dirty tunics, wandered down the dark and tortuous streets to gain the slimmest of livelihoods. The *gallinae* or *chickens*\* were those who went everywhere to roost, and who carried away everything they could lay their hands on: bedclothing, lamps, vases, and even household goods.

Among the more distinguished class of courtezans, the *delicatae*, or, to employ the French word, *mignonnes*, were those who kept company with the Roman knights, the perfumed small gentry and the rich of all stations; they did not pride themselves, however, on their delicacy in the matter of money, and they never found that this latter smelled of the freed man, the adulterer or the informer; they were not difficult to deal with, except for those who came without well-filled purses. Flavia Domitilla, whom the Emperor Vespasian married, and who was the mother of Titus, had been a *delicata* before being empress. The *famosae*, or the *famous ones*, were courtezans of good will who, although patrician women, mothers of families and matrons, had no shame in prostituting themselves in the lupanars:\*\* some, in order to satisfy a horrible lust, others, for purposes of an ignoble gain, which they dispensed in sacrifices to their favorite divinities. The *junices*, or *heifers*, and the *juvencae*, or *cows*, were those who owed their nicknames to their embonpoint, to their facility and to the amplitude of their throats. The *lupae* or *wolves*, the *lupanae* or *wood-runners*, had been so named in memory of the nurse of Romulus and Remus, Acca Laurentia; like the shepherd Faustulus' woman, they walked by night in the fields and woods, imitating the cry of a famished wolf in order to summon the prey for which they lay in wait. This nickname had been borne in the same sense by the dicteriades of the Ceramicus at Athens. It was afterward naturalized at Rome and became the

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. the French *poule*.

\*\*Translator's Note:—Treated as an English word throughout.

generic designation of all courtezans. "I believe," says Ausonius, in one of his epigrams, "I believe her father is uncertain, but her mother is truly a wolf." The *noctilucae* were also night-walkers; as in the case of the *noctuvigilae*, or night-watchers, the epithet had been applied to Venus by the poets, who thought thereby to honor the goddess. The women of the night were also called by the general name of *nonariae*, for the reason that the lupanars did not open till the ninth hour and the wolves did not begin their course till that hour. Those of the lowest class were called *pedaneae*, for the reason that they did not spare their shoe-soles when they had any. The *walkers* did not possess those little feet of which the Romans were so fond, and which Ovid never fails, in his mythological descriptions, to attribute to the goddesses.

The *dores* owed their nickname to their costume, or rather to their nudity; for they showed themselves absolutely naked, like the nymphs of the sea, among whom mythology had distinguished Doris, their mother, by ascribing to her the most voluptuous and well-rounded of figures. Juvenal cries out against these *dores* or *dorides*, "who," he says, "like a vile actor depicting a wise matron, despoil themselves of all garments in order to represent goddesses." The public women were designated by still other names, which they accepted with equal indifference: *mulieres*, or women; *pallacae*, from the Greek *pallace*; *pellices*, in memory of the Bacchantes who had tiger-skin tunics; or *prosedae*, those who waited seated for someone to approach them. They were also called *peregrinae*, or *foreign women*, the name constantly given them in the Hebrew books, for the reason that the majority had come from all points of the universe to sell themselves at Rome. Many had been brought there as prisoners of war after each conquest of the Roman eagle; many belonged to the ranks of the procuresses and the lenons, who had bought them and who exploited their labor. The Romans, before they had become wholly corrupted, prided themselves on the fact that only foreign women were to be seen among the sorrowful victims of their debauchery; these creatures bore also a name which has been preserved, in a manner, in our popular speech: *putae* or *puti* or *putilli*, either because this name recalled that of the goddess Potua, who presided over that which was possible; or because it was derived from *potus*, by allusion to an amorous philtre; because it meant "the pure" (*putae* for *purae*), by antiphrasis; or finally, because it was intended to disguise an obscene image, *putei* having

been contracted into *puti*, preserving for the word the sense of *well* or *cistern*. Whatever was the origin of the word, lovers made use of it, at first, in order to pay a compliment to their mistresses. Plautus, in his *Asinaria*, brings upon the stage a lover who employs this epithet, along with others drawn from natural history: "Tell me, then, my little duck, my dove, my cat, my swallow, my crow, my sparrow, my well of love!" The expression *quadrantariae* was only employed as a sign of contempt and applied to the lowest prostitutes; it referred to the miserable wages with which these latter were content; the *quadrans* was the fourth part of the Roman *as*, and this small bronze piece, which was equivalent to twenty centimes in our money, was the fee ordinarily given the rubber in the public baths. Cicero, in his plea for Caelius, says that the *quadrantaria*, at least when she was not a mistress, belonged by right to the rubber. Cicero was making, perhaps, a malicious allusion to the sister of Claudius, his enemy, whom he had nicknamed *quadrans*, for the reason that, while playing with her when they were young, he had amused himself by tossing her coins, which she caught in her lap. All the public women were *quaestuariae* and *quaestuosae*, for the reason that they carried on a traffic in money (*quaestus*), with their bodies. During the reign of Trajan, a census was taken of the *quaestuariae* who served the pleasures of Rome, and 32,000 of them were counted. Plautus, in his *Miles*, defines the *quaestuosa*: "A woman who gives her body as pasturage to another (*quae alat corpus corpore*)." The *quasillariae* were poor servants, who escaped for a few moments, with a basket containing their daily tasks, and who went to prostitute themselves for a few deniers, after which they would return to the house and go on spinning the wool. *Vagae* were the wandering women; *ambulatrices* were the walkers; *scorta* were prostitutes of the vilest sort, *skins*, as this insulting word must be translated; as to the *scorta devia*, they waited at their homes for customers and merely stationed themselves at the window to draw trade. All were equally insulted by the terms *scrantiae*, *scruptae* or *scratiae*, which we are forced to translate as *pots de chambre* or *chairs with holes*.

These were not the only epithets to which the courtezans of Rome had to submit with good or bad grace, in addition to the two principal classifications, which divided them into *meretrices* and *prostibulae*; they were also called *suburanae*, or women of Subura, a suburb of Rome near the Via Sacra that was only inhabited by thieves and fallen



women. One of the *Priapeia* authors mentions, among the young *suburanae* who had won their freedom with the product of their trade (*de quaestu libera facta suo est*) the beautiful Telethusa, whom Prostitution had enriched while making her ugly. The *summoenianae* were likewise women of the suburbs, who peopled the deserted streets of the Summoenim, near the walls of the city, where were located the lupanars or the caves which took their place. "Whoever will be Zoilus' guest", says an epigram of Martial, "must sup between two matronly *summoenianae*!" Martial, in another epigram, however, seems to wish to give these women their due: "The courtesan," he says, "hides herself from the gaze of the curious by drawing bolt and curtain; rarely does the *Summoenium* leave her door open." Finally, the *schoenicalae*, who haunted the same segregated quarters, and who sold their caresses to soldiers and slaves, wore girdles of rushes or straw (*skoinos*) in order to announce that they were always for sale. One commentator has made learned researches which tend to prove that these women of the slaves and soldiers wore their girdles as high as possible (*alticinctae*), in order to be less disturbed in the practise of their profession. Another commentator, a learned Hebraist, would see in the *schoenicalae* of the Romans those Babylonian prostitutes whom we see, in Baruch and the Jewish prophets, bound with cords and seated beside the road, burning incense. Still another commentator, who relies upon passages from Festus, maintains that these women of low degree owed their nicknames to the gross perfumes with which they sprinkled their bodies,—"*schoeno delibutas*," as Plautus says. The *naniae* were dwarfs or children, who had been trained from the age of six for their infamous trade. The "slugs" (this nickname has been preserved in almost all languages) possessed more than one analogy with the viscous and driveling mollusc, which is to be found in damp places, and which leaves its slimy traces wherever it has passed, feeding on fruits and herbs. The *circulatrices* included all the vagabond women. The title of *Charybdes*, or *gulfs*, was naturally applied to those who swallowed up the health, money and honor of youth. The *pretiosae*, who sold their favors dearly, at least did no harm except to their customers' purse. Courtezans of the people or of the nobility, *meretrices* or *prostibulae*, all wore the garment of their class, that is to say, the toga or short tunic, and all had a right to the name of *togatae*, a shameful designation in their case, whereas the Roman men were honored by the name of *togati* (citizens in toga).

Finally, to bring this nomenclature of Roman Prostitution to an end, one should not forget to remark that the public women, being often collected in the same places, their assemblages were called *conciones meretricum* and *senacula*, sometimes even the *senatus mulierum*, or senate of women, whether these unions took place in the street, in the taverns or in the bakery shops. The high-toned courtezans had, also, their places of asylum at Baiae, at Clusium, at Capua and in the different cities where they went to take the waters and to recover from their labors; sometimes, they went in so great numbers to the baths of Clusium that the remark was made: "There is a herd of the beasts of Clusium! (*Clusinum pecus*)", whenever four or five were gathered together to laugh and provoke gallant remarks.

It is unpleasant to learn that the majority of these distinctive appellations, applied to the public women, were equally applied to men, to slaves and, above all, to children, who took an infamous part in the unbridled debauchery of the Romans. Masculine Prostitution was certainly more ardent, more general, at Rome than feminine Prostitution; but we have not the courage to descend into these mysterious and infected depths and we find ourselves lacking in heart as we approach a subject brazenly treated in the poems of Horace, Catullus, Martial and even Virgil;\* we scarcely dare do more than enumerate the odious cohort of agents and auxiliaries to these abominable manners. For each class of female prostitutes there was a corresponding class of male prostitutes, there being no difference between the two classes save that of sex. The Latin language had, so to speak, augmented its riches in the creation of words to describe these specialties of vice. These infamous ones were not even branded by the law, since the police regulation did not assign them any special garb, and the aedile did not inscribe them in his records of Prostitution. They were left, in their turpitude, a liberty which bore witness to the indulgence and even to the favor which legislation accorded them, so long as they were not free-born Roman citizens. They were, ordinarily, the children of slaves, who had been instructed from an early age to an obscene trade. "They call *children for rent* (*pueri meritorii*) those who, by their own will or from force, lend themselves to the shameful passions of their master." Such is the definition furnished us by one of Juvenal's ancient commentators. In his satires, this great poet, who

\**Translator's Note*:—For a well known example from Virgil, see the *Corydon* (Eclogue II.)

has branded with a red iron the ignominies of his day, returns on every page to that disgusting use to which these unfortunate children were condemned from birth, an ignoble yoke which they accepted without complaint. They were called *pathici* (patients), *ephebi* (adolescents), *gemelli* (twins), *catamiti* (hypocrites), *amasii* (lovers), etc. It would be too long and too fastidious a task to pass in review this vile assortment of figurative and significant names which, with the corruption of Roman manners, had been created to describe the incredible variety of these sad victims of Prostitution. It will suffice to say that the adolescents, trained to this abominable art from their seventh year, had to meet certain demands of physical beauty, bordering on that of the feminine sex; they were beardless and without bodily hair, anointed with perfumed oils, with long curled locks, a brazen manner, coquettish glances, lascivious gestures, a nonchalant gait and obscene movements. All these vile servants of pleasure found themselves ranged under two categories which, in general, did not encroach upon their special attributes; there were those who were never more than passive and docile victims; and there were those who became, in their turn, active, and who might at need render immodesty for immodesty to their debauched Maccenas. These last, whose good offices the Roman ladies did not disdain, were ordinarily eunuchs (*Spadones*), who, though castrated, still preserved the sign of virility. Others had been submitted to a complete castration, which made of them a bastard race, with something of the character at once of the man and of the woman. This was a refinement of which the *paedicones* (pederasts) were very fond and jealous. For the rest, in order to understand the incredible prevalence of these male prostitutes among the Romans, we must remember that the latter demanded of the masculine sex all the pleasures which the feminine could give them and a few others, still more extraordinary, which the latter sex, destined by nature for purposes of love, would have found it hard to procure for them. Each citizen, no matter how commendable his character or how elevated his social position, had, then, in his house a seraglio of young slaves, under the eyes of his family, wife and children. Rome, moreover, was filled with lads who hired themselves out the same as the public women, with houses devoted to this variety of Prostitution and with panderers who had no other trade than that of making a hideous profit out of a throng of slaves and freed men.

If libertinism of this sort had no more clever representative than

certain dancers and mimes called *cinaedi* (from the Greek verb, *kinein*, to move), who were almost all eunuchs, it was likewise among the class of female dancers and mountebanks that the best subjects were to be recruited for the pantomimic sports of love. The flute-players and dancers were as sought after at Rome as they had been in Greece and Asia; they were brought from those countries, where there was a perpetual school to train them in the lessons of the art of pleasure. They were not officially devoted to Prostitution; their names were not to be read in the aedile's books, at least not in the vast repertory of courtezans; they commended themselves solely by the trade which belonged to them, and which they practised, moreover, with a sort of emulation; but they were not deprived of other resources which this trade permitted them to make use of at the same time. They did not differ, therefore, from the public women, properly so-called, except in the liberty which they enjoyed in not making Prostitution their principal industry; they dealt, moreover, only with the rich, and they hired themselves out, by the hour or by the night, to play the flute, to dance or to mimic at the feasts and orgies. These women of joy differed from one another, not only in their figures, their faces, their complexions, their language, but also by the character of their dancing and their music. Among them were to be distinguished the Spaniards, (*Gaditanae*), who knew marvelously how to excite, by their songs and dances, the lust and desires of the most frigid spectators. "Young and lubricious daughters of Cadiz endlessly shake their lascivious loins to skillful vibrations." It is Martial who thus depicts their national dances, and Juvenal adds one more trait by saying that the *Gaditanae* crouched all the way to the earth in shaking their haunches (*ad terram tremulo descendant clune puellae*); a powerful aphrodisiac, according to the poet, an ardent spur to the most languishing. All the dancers did not come from Spain: Ionia, the Isle of Lesbos and Syria had lost nothing of their ancient privileges when it came to furnishing debauchery with women the best trained in the art of the flute and that of the dance. Those who were called, without distinction, *dancers*, *fluters*, *players of the lyre* (*saltatrices*, *fidicinae*, *tibicinae*) were Lesbian, Syrian or Ionian women; there were also Egyptian, Indian and Nubian women; a black, yellow or copper-colored skin was as suitable as the whitest to the highly voluptuous manifestations of the Ionic or Bactrian dance. The one dance was called *Bactriasmus*, remarkable for its spasmodic movements of the loins; the other, *ionici motus*,



imitated with an obscene verisimilitude the pantomime of love. Horace assures us that the virgins of his time, more advanced than they should have been for their age and condition, took the trouble to learn the poses and movements of the Ionic dance (*motus doceri gaudet ionicus matura virgo*). The Latin even indicates that they took pleasure in it. Among all these foreign women the palm was given to the Syrians (*ambubaiaie*), who lent themselves to all purposes, as their name would seem to indicate. There were no good suppers without them; but since they did not pay the *meretricium*, or tax on public women, the aedile did not show them much favor when they were taken in fraud, and he would first sentence them to a fine, later to be whipped and finally to exile. In this latter case, they would leave by one gate of Rome and return by another. The greater part of the mountebanks did not work except for the rich and in the interior of houses; a few, however, performed in the public squares and at the street corners, where it required no more than the sound of a flute or the tinkling of a bell to attract a crowd of people about the dancers and musicians. As to the dancers and musicians themselves, they played exactly the same part their companions did.

This unbridled Prostitution, putting on a thousand disguises and creeping everywhere under a thousand varied forms, nourished and enriched an immense horde of courtiers and pimps of both sexes, who kept shops of debauchery or who carried on in many fashions their degrading trade, without having anything to fear from the aedile's police; for the law blinked its eyes at *lenocinium*, provided it was not a Roman citizen or a Roman *ingenua* who bore the brand of infamy. But, inasmuch as the trade was a lucrative one, many Roman men and women of free birth and condition devoted themselves secretly to the art of procurer, for a veritable art it was, one filled with ruses and intrigues.\* The generic name of these depraved beings, punishable only by public contempt, was *leno* for the men, *lena* for the women. Priscianus derives these words from the verb, *lenire*, because, he says, this vile agent of Prostitution seduces and corrupts souls by means of gentle and caressing words (*deleniendo*). In the beginning, *leno* was applied indifferently to the two sexes, as though the lenon were neither male nor female; but later, the feminine, *lena*, was employed

\*Translator's Note:—This "art" was one that persisted in Latin countries, particularly among the Spaniards and Italians. Cf. Aretino's "The Art of the Procureess (*Mezzana*)" in the *Ragionamenti* (Putnam translation, Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926).

in order to describe more precisely the intervention of women in this odious industry. "I am a lenon," says a character in the *Adelphoi* of Terence, "I am the common scourge of youth." Among the lenons of both sexes were a number of different species which had business relations with the different species of public women. We have already said that the bakers, the hostlers, the wine-shop-proprietors and the bathhouse-keepers as well as the women who kept baths, wine-shops, inns and bakeries, all mingled more or less in the business of *lenocinium*. The lenon existed in all walks of life and hid himself under all sorts of masks; he had, as a rule, no special costume or distinctive character. The Latin theater, which was continually placing him on the stage, had, however, conferred upon him a variegated habit and represented him as beardless and with shorn head. We must cite, also, among the professions which were most favorable to the traffic of the lenons, those of the barber and perfumer; thus, under certain circumstances, *tonsor* and *unguentarius* are synonyms of *leno*. One of the ancient commentators of Petronius, a simple and candid Dutchman, Douza, enters into singular details on the subject of the barber shops of Rome,\* in which the master barber kept a troop of beautiful young boys whose amusement was not to cut hair, depilate faces and trim beards, but who, trained from an early age in all the filthiest mysteries of debauchery, hired themselves out at a steep price for suppers and nocturnal celebrations. (*Quorum frequenti opera non in tondenda barba, pilisque vellendis modo, aut barba rasitanda, sed vero et pygiacis sacris cinaedice, ne nefarie dicam, de nocte admininstrandis utebantur*). As to the perfumers,\*\* their business placed them in direct communication with the militia of Prostitution, for whose use the essences, perfumed oils, odoriferous powders, erotic pomades and all the most delicate unguents had been invented and perfected; for, man or woman, young or old, one always perfumed oneself before entering the lists of Venus, so that a Ganymede was designated by the word *unguentatus*, that is, sprinkled with perfumed oil. "Each day," says Lucius Afranius, "the *unguentarius* stands before his mirror; he, whose eyebrows are shaved, whose beard has been pulled out and whose haunches have been depilated; he who, at the feasts, as a young man

\**Translator's Note*:—On the subject of the Roman barber shops, see for example, Terence's *Phormio*.

\*\**Translator's Note*:—Cf., in modern Prostitution, the massage and manicure parlors, etc., which occasionally fall foul of the law.

accompanied by his lover, sleeps upon the lowest couch, clad in a tunic with flowing sleeves; he who seeks not only wine, but the caresses of a man (*qui non modo vinosus, sed virosus quoque sit*) . . . can one doubt that such a one as this does what the *cinaedi* are in the habit of doing?"

Ordinarily, all the slaves were trained for *lenocinium*; for this purpose, they had but to recall, as they grew older, the experiences of their youth. The old ones, above all, had no other manner of devoting themselves anew to Prostitution. The servant maids, *ancillae*, for their part, merited the nicknames of *admonitrices*, of *stimulatrices*, and of *conciliatrices*. They carried letters, arranged the hour, the night, the rendezvous and the conditions, prepared the place and the arms of combat, aiding, exciting, impelling and leading on. Nothing could equal their cleverness, unless it was their roguishness. There was no such thing as an invincible virtue, when they set themselves to overcome it. But it was necessary to give them much and promise more. There were little servant maids, *ancillulae*, who could compete with the cleverest and most deceitful. Nevertheless, the most officious domestics were less perverse and less despicable than those courtiers of debauchery, who took the field only from love of gain, and who had no master or mistress to please. It is of these lenons that Asconius Pedianus speaks in his commentary on Cicero: "These corrupters of prostitutes are in the same class with those persons whom they lead, despite themselves, to commit adulteries which the laws punish." *Perductores* were those who led their victims into vice and infamy; *adductores* were those charged with procuring subjects for debauchery, and who, so to speak, placed themselves on sale; the *tractatores* were those who drove a bargain of this sort. We cannot conceive the extent and importance of such a traffic as this, which took place every day between the interested parties. Like the old procuresses, the lenons were almost invariably the stale débris of Prostitution, who possessed no more ardor for the sexual service of others; a few even accumulated the profits and shared the hardships of both professions, by combining them.

In conclusion, we must include, also, in this last group of male and female lenons, the masters and mistresses of the bad houses, the *lupanarii*, who had the upper hand in these places. The entrepreneurs of Prostitution clung to the last rung of the ladder of shame; although the jurisconsult Ulpianus recognized the fact that lupanars were to

be discovered in the activities carried on in the houses of many honest folk. (*Nam et in multorum honestorum virorum praediis lupanaria exercentur.*) The proprietors of houses took no part in the infamy of their tenants; but besides the lupanars, there were still other rungs on the ladder of turpitude which belonged by right to the *belluarii*, the *caprarii* and the *anserarii*; the first had intercourse with beasts of various sorts, especially with dogs and monkeys; the second with nannygoats; the third with geese,\* "the delight of Priapus," as Petronius calls them; and these impure animals, trained to the trade of their keepers, offered themselves as docile accomplices to the crime of bestiality! "If men are lacking," says Juvenal in describing the mysteries of the Bona Dea in his satire on Women, "the maenad of Priapus is ready to submit herself to a vigorous ass."

. . . *Hic si*

*Quaeritur et desunt homines, mora nulla peripsam*

*Quominus imposito clunem submittat asello.*

\**Translator's Note*:—See Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, American edition, pp. 562-3, "Is there anything wrong with the goose?"



## CHAPTER XVII

THE places of Prostitution at Rome were, of necessity, as numerous as the prostitutes; they presented as many varieties, indicated ordinarily by their names, just as the names of public women were descriptive of the different varieties of their trade. There were, as we have said, two great categories of women, the stationary and the vagrant, those who worked by day and those who worked by night; there were, also, two principal kinds of public houses, those destined only for the practice of legal Prostitution, the lupanars, properly so called, and those which, under various pretexts, afforded asylum for debauchery and, so to speak, the means of hiding it, such as the wine-shops, the taverns, the baths, etc. It is to be understood that these establishments, always suspect and of ill fame, did not always stand on the same leg and took on, from the Prostitution which crept into them stealthily, or which was installed in them brazenly, a particular aspect, a local physiognomy and a more or less animated, a more or less indecent life.

Publius Victor, in his book on the *Places and Regions of Rome*, determines the existence of forty-six lupanars; but he is speaking only of the most important, which might be regarded as establishments of public utility, and which were placed under the direct surveillance of the aediles. It would be difficult to explain, otherwise, this small number of lupanars in comparison with the great number of prostitutes. Sextus Rufus, in his nomenclature of the Regions of Rome, does not enumerate the lupanars which were to be found there, but lets their existence be understood from the forty-eight baths in the first region, called the porta Capena, in addition to the Thermae of Commodius, those of Serverus and a number of baths which he designates by the names of their founders or their proprietors. Otherwise, he mentions by name but a single lupanar, established by Heliogabalus in the sixth region, under the insolent name of *little senate of women* (*senatulum mulierum*). There is not, in the Latin authors, a single complete description of a lupanar; but one may easily compile one, with the most scrupulous exactitude, from five or six passages in the poets who, with no preliminaries, conduct their readers into those places with which it is taken for granted they are familiar. We may

assume that if the interior organization of the lupanars was practically the same in all cases, these houses differed in the matter of furnishings according to the quarter in which they were situated. Thus, the dirtiest and the most populous were certainly those of the fifth region, called the Esquiline, and those of the eleventh region, called the Great Circus; the most elegant and best-fitted were those of the fourth region, that of the Temple of Peace, which included the Quarter of Love and that of Venus. As to the Subura, situated in the second region, that of Mount Coelius, there were grouped here, about the great market (*macellum magnum*) and the barracks of the foreign troops (*castra peregrina*), a throng of houses of Prostitution, (*lupariae*), as Sextus Rufus calls them in his nomenclature, and a still more considerable number of wine-shops, hostelries, barber shops and bakeries. The other regions of the city were not free from these *lupariae*, although they possessed also bakeries, barber shops and hostelries; but these bad places were little frequented; the aediles had taken care to confine them as much as possible to regions remote from the center of the city, all the more for the reason that the ordinary clientele of these places inhabited the suburbs and plebeian quarters. It was, always, about the theatres, the circuses, the markets and the fields that the lupanars preferably grouped themselves in order to take as large a tribute as possible from the passions and purses of the people.

The Great Circus appears to have been surrounded with vaulted cells (*cellae* and *fornices*), which served only for the use of the low people before, during and after the games; but these asylums of debauchery, accredited by custom, should not be included in the same class as those lupanars regulated by the aedile's police. Prudentius, recounting the martyrdom of St. Agnes, asserts that the great vaults and porticoes which still existed in his time about the Great Circus had been abandoned to the public practice of debauchery; and Panvinus, in his treatise on the *Games* of the Circus, concludes from this passage that all the circuses had lupanars as indispensable annexes. We know, as a matter of fact, that the prostitutes who took part in the solemn rites of the circus and in the theatrical performances, left their seats as often as they were called out to satisfy the increasingly warm desires of those about them. The learned Jesuit, Boulanger, in his treatise *Du Cirque*, does not hesitate to declare that Prostitution took place in the circus and even in the theatre, and he cites this verse from an old Latin poet in honor of a courtesan who was well known at

the Great Circus: *Deliciae populi, magno notissima Circo Quintilia*. In short, under the rows of seats occupied by the people, were vaulted arches forming sombre retreats favorable to popular Prostitution, which did not demand many refinements. One would almost be authorized in assigning the same destination to the ruins of an immense subterranean construction which is still to be seen near the ancient port of Misenum and which is always referred to as the *Hundred Rooms* (*centum camerae*). It is probable that this singular edifice, the use of which we do not know and find it hard to understand, was but a vast lupanar appropriated to the needs of the Roman fleet.

But ordinarily, the lupanars, far from being built upon so gigantic a scale, were able to accomodate but a limited number of very narrow cells, without windows, having no other exit than a door, which often was closed only by a curtain. The plan of one of the houses of Pompeii may give us a very just idea of what a lupanar was like with its rows of little cells, which undoubtedly opened under a portico and upon an interior court, as in those houses in which the sleeping rooms (*cubiculi*), generally very small and with room for but a single bed, are lighted only by a door, through which two persons cannot pass except side-wise. The rooms were merely more numerous and closer to one another in the lupanars. During the day, the establishment, being closed, had no need of a sign, and it was but a futile luxury when the master of the place had the obscene attribute of Priapus painted upon the wall; this same figure was suspended at the entrance of the resort dedicated to the god. Of an evening, at the ninth hour, a fire-pot or a large lamp in the form of a phallus served as a Pharos to the debauchee, who came there boldly, or who was sometimes drawn there by chance. The girls took their places before the door of the house; each had her accustomed cell and in front of the door of this cell was a signboard on which was inscribed the name (*meretricium nomen*) which the courtesan bore in the practice of her trade. Sometimes, in addition to the name, there was an indication of the price of admission to the cell, in order to avoid disputes on one side or the other. If the cell were occupied, the signboard was reversed, and on the rear was to be read the word: *occupata* (busy). When the cell had no occupant, it was said, in the language of the place, to be naked (*nuda*). Plautus, in his *Asinaria*, and Martial, in his epigrams, have preserved for us these details of manners. "May she write on your door," says Plautus: " 'I am busy.' " Which proves that, under certain circum-

stances, the inscription was written in chalk or in charcoal by the courtesan herself. "The immodest *lena*," says Martial, "closes the cell which is furnished with a customer. (*Obscena nudam lena fornicem clausit*).'" A passage of Seneca, badly interpreted, gave rise to the belief that, in certain lupanars, the prostitutes who stood in front of the door bore the signboards suspended from their necks and even fastened to their foreheads; but this phrase, *Nomen tuum pependit in fronte; stetisti cum meretricibus*, is better understood by seeing this signboard suspended from the door (*in fronte*), while the girls remained seated beside it.

The rooms were almost all furnished in the same manner; the difference consisted only in the greater or lesser amount of furniture and in the paintings which adorned the partitions. These paintings, in distemper and in *l'eau d'oeuf*, represented, either in the form of pictures or ornaments, those subjects which were most in harmony with the habits of the place; in the lupanars of the people, there were gross scenes of Prostitution; in those of a little higher class, there were erotic images drawn from mythology; there were allegories taken from the cults of Venus, Cupid, Priapus and the domestic gods of debauchery. The phallus reappeared unceasingly in the most clownish forms, it became, in turn, a bird, a fish, an insect; it disappeared into baskets of fruits; it pursued nymphs under water and doves into the air; it was wreathed in garlands and plaited in wreaths; the imagination of the painter seemed to play with the indecent emblem of Prostitution, with the object of exaggerating the indecency; but the remarkable thing about these paintings, so altogether appropriate to the place they occupied, was the fact that one never saw in them the organ of the woman alone; as though there were a tacit convention to respect it, even in the place in which it was held in the greatest contempt. The same scenes, the same images, were to be met with, often, in the painted ornamentation of conjugal bedrooms; visual modesty no longer existed among the Romans, who almost deified nudity. The interior decoration of the cells of the lupanar was not, on the other hand, commendable for its freshness or its brilliancy; lamp smoke and a myriad nameless stains disfigured the walls, which bore, here and there, the stigmata of their unidentified guests. As to furniture, it was composed of a mat, a bed covering and a lamp. The mat, ordinarily grossly woven out of reeds and rushes, was often ripped and always worn and beaten down; it was replaced in some houses by cushions



and even by a small wooden bed (*pulvinar, cubiculum, pavementum*); the covering, hideously soiled, was but a wretched mass of pieces of varicolored stuff, called on this account *cento* or patchwork. The lamp, of copper or of bronze, shed a dubious light through a miasmatic and deleterious atmosphere, which prevented the oil from burning and the flames from rising above a smoky aureole. The wretched furnishings were chosen expressly so that no one might be tempted to steal them; there was nothing to take in such places as these.

And yet, it is certain, from the very designations of these houses of debauchery, that they were not all frequented by the vile populace, and that they presented, as a consequence, notable differences in interior régime. In the best-ordered lupanars, a fountain and a basin adorned the square court, the *impluvium*, around which cells or chambers, the *cellae*, were arranged; otherwise, these rooms were called *sellae*, places to sit, because they were too small to contain a bed. But in the lupanars reserved exclusively for the plebs, and which were no more than caves or subterranean passages, each cell, being vaulted, was known as a *fornix*; it is from this word, which soon became a synonym for lupanar, that the word *fornication* was coined, to express what took place in the shadows of the *fornices*. The infectious odor of these vaults was notorious, and those who had been in them bore about with them for a long time afterwards this nauseating odor, which was something besides that of smoke and oil: *Olenti in fornice*, says Horace; *redolet adhuc fuliginum fornicis*, says Seneca. There was a lupanar of the lowest class called a *stabula*, because visitors were often received there, pell-mell, upon the straw, as in a stable. The *pergulae*, or balconies, owed their name to the character of their construction: sometimes, an open gallery ran the length of the first floor and overhung the public way: the girls were placed on exhibition on this scaffold-like structure, and the *leno* or the *lena* remained below at the door; in other cases, on the contrary, the *leno* or *lena* occupied a high window which overlooked the throng of youths and girls. Sometimes, the *pergula* was but a little low house, in the form of a penthouse, under which were seated members of one or the other sex. When the lupanar was surmounted by a sort of tower or pyramid, on the top of which, of an evening, a lantern was lighted, they called it a *turturilla*, or dove-hatch, for the reason that doves and turtledoves made their nests there; St. Isidore of Seville, speaking of these nests,

permits himself a word-play which is not as orthodox as it might be: *Ita dictus locus, quo corruptelae fiebant, quod ibi turturi opera daretur, id est peni.* The *casaurium* was the lupanar beyond the wall, a simple hut, covered with reeds and stubble, which served as a retreat for the wandering troop of girls who were at odds with the aedile's police. The word *casaurium*, in the mouth of the people, appeared to have no more remote an origin than *casa*, a thatched cottage, hut or barracks; but scholars have found in this word a Greek etymology, deriving it from *Rassa* or from *Rasaura*, which signified prostitute: *Rasaura* had become, quite naturally, *casaurium*. It was in these holes that the *scrupedae* (*stony ones*) sometimes fled, when Prostitution found a not unusual hiding-place in the midst of rocks and rubbish.

The lupanars had, moreover, certain general names which were applied to all of them without distinction; "*meritoria*," says St. Isidore of Seville, "are those secret places in which adulteries are committed." They were, above all, those place devoted to the Prostitution of men, of children and of *meritorii*. "*Ganeae*," says Donatius, "are those subterranean caverns where debaucheries are committed, the name of which is derived from the Greek, *gea*, earth." "*Ganeae*," says the Jesuit, Boulanger, "are those shops of Prostitution so named from analogy with *ganos*, pleasure, and *gyne*, woman."\* The expression, *lustrum*, is frequently employed in the sense of lupanar, and what was at first but a play of words became a usual locution, in which no malice was longer seen. *Lustrum* signified at once *expiation* and *wild wood*. The first traces of Prostitution were left in the thick shadows of forests, and afterwards, as though to expiate her wild-beast manners, the prostitute paid a *lustral* and expiatory tax; this was the origin of the word *lustrum*, used for lupanar. "Those who, in retired and shameful places, abandon themselves to the vices of gluttony and idleness," says Festus, "deserve to be accused of living as beasts (*in lustris vitam agere*)." The poet Lucilius gives us a still better understanding of the true meaning of this expression, in his verses: "What commerce is yours, in your quest about the walls and in the segregated places? (*in lustris circum oppida lustrans*)." The name of *desidiabula* (*lounging-places*) was also, and with reason, applied to the lupanar to describe the idleness of its wretched inhabitants. If there were only women in an establishment of Prostitution, it took the name of *senate*

\*Translator's Note:—As a matter of fact, *ganea* (or *ganeum*), literally a cook-shop, is from the Greek *ganymi*, meaning to live high.

of women, conventicle, court of prostitutes (*senatus mulierum, conciliabulum, meretricia curia, etc.*); and according to whether these names were taken in good or evil part, epithets were added to round out the sense; thus, Plautus speaks of the *conventicle of misfortune*, which was one of these infamous places. When both Venuses, to adopt the Latin euphemism, were satisfied in the same resort, these resorts were pompously known as *consistories of pleasure* (*libidinum consistorium*).

The personnel of the lupanar varied as much as did its clientele. Sometimes the *leno*, or the *lena*, had in his establishment only slaves purchased with his own money and trained by himself; sometimes this personage was but the proprietor of the place and merely served as a go-between for his clients, who left him a share of each night's intake; sometimes, the master or the mistress of the place sufficed for everything, prepared the signboard, discussed the bargains, brought water or refreshments, acted as sentinel and guarded the *busy* cells; sometimes, again, these speculators disdained to concern themselves with minor details, but possessed servant maids and slave girls, each of whom had his special employment; the *ancillae ornatrices* watched over the toilet of customers, repaired disorders in the toilet and rouged faces. The *aquarii* or *aquarioli* distributed refreshing drinks of cold water, wine and vinegar to the debauchees who complained of heat or fatigue; the *bacario* was a little slave who assisted the guests in washing up, presenting the water in a vase (*bacar*) with a long spout and a long neck; lastly, the *villicus* or steward had the task of arguing prices with the clients and seeing that the latter paid before reversing the sign on the cell. There were, moreover, men and women attached to the establishment to act as subordinates. It was their duty to go through the neighborhood surrounding the lupanar and recruit customers, by calling to them and attracting them in order to draw in the young and old libertines. Hence, the names applied to them of *adductores, conductores*, and above all, *admissarii*. These emissaries of Prostitution drew their names from the fact that they were always ready, at need, to change their rôle and to prostitute themselves if an occasion for a debauch on their own part occurred. In the language of cattle-grazers and Roman peasants, *admissarius* was, quite simply, the bull, the stallion, which is led to the cow or to the mare. Cicero, in his oration against Piso, gives us an evidence of the monomania of these men-hunters and pleasure-seekers. "This emissary, as soon as he knew that the philosopher had indulged in a eulogy of pleasure, was

greatly wrought up; he was stimulated in all his voluptuous instincts by the thought that he had found not a master of virtue, but a prodigy of libertinism."

The costume of the girls in the lupanars was remarkable only in the matter of coiffure, which consisted of a blond wig; for the courtesan indicated by this the fact that she laid no claims to the title of matron, all the Roman matrons having black hair, which testified to their birth as implied in the Latin word *ingenua*. This blond wig, made with hair or tresses which had been gilded and tinted, seems to have been the essential part of the complete disguise which the courtesan affected in taking her place in the lupanar, which she did not even enter without a *nom de guerre*. She must, otherwise, in other points, avoid all resemblance to respectable women. Thus, she might not wear the bandelet, "*vitta*," a large ribbon with which the matrons bound their hair; she might not put on a stole, a long tunic falling to the ankles, which was reserved exclusively for matrons. "They call *matrons*," says Festus, "those who have the right to wear stoles." But the rule of the aedile relative to the dress of courtesans did not concern that which they adopted for the service of the lupanar. Thus, in the majority of these places, they were nude, absolutely nude, or covered only with a veil of transparent silk, under which one lost no secret of their nudity, but they always wore the blond wig, adorned with gold pins or wreathed in flowers. Not only did they await their customers nude in their cells, or even promenade under the porticoes "*nudasque meretrices furtim*," etc., says Petronius, but they even appeared in this condition at the entrance of the lupanars, in the street and under the gaze of passers-by. Juvenal, in his eleventh satire, shows us an infamous *giton*\* on the threshold of his malodorous cave, (*nudum olido stans fornice*). Often like the prostitutes of Jerusalem and Babylon, they would veil the face, leaving the rest of the body unveiled, or they would merely cover their breasts with stuff of gold. *Tunc nuda papillis prostit auratis*, says Juvenal. The customers (*amatores*) had, therefore, merely to choose according to their tastes. The place was, moreover, but feebly lighted, by a firepot or by a lamp which burned at the door, and the keenest eye could discover in its rays nothing but motionless forms and voluptuous poses. In the interior of the cells, there was not much to be seen, although the objects were

\**Translator's Note*.—A male prostitute. The name of a character in Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*.



close at hand, "and sometimes even, the lamp being extinguished by a current of air or from lack of oil, one did not even know," says one poet, "whether one was having an affair with a Canidia or with his grandmother."

When a poor unfortunate child sacrificed herself for the first time there was a celebration in the lupanar; they hung up at the door a lantern which cast an unaccustomed glow over the environs of the evil place; they surrounded with laurel branches the façade of the horrible sanctuary, and these laurels would outrage public decency for a number of days; and sometimes, when the sacrifice had been consummated, the author of the villainous act, which he paid for very dearly, would leave the den, crowned himself with laurels. This enemy of virginity would imagine that he had won thus a splendid victory, and he would have it celebrated by musicians, who were a part of the personnel of debauchery. Such a custom, tolerated by the aedile, was all the more fatal an outrage to manners for the reason that the newly married, especially among the people, preserved an analogous custom and also adorned with laurel branches the door of their dwelling the day after the wedding night. *Ornentur, says Juvenal, postes et grandi janua lauro.* Tertullian also says, in speaking of the new bride: "she must come out from this door, which is decorated with garlands and lanterns, as from a new rendezvous of public debauchery." We may also understand that the establishment and opening of a new lupanar, occasioned a similar employment of laurels. In reading Martial, Catullus and Petronius, one is forced, with horror, to recognize the fact that the prostitution of male children in the lupanars of Rome exceeded that of women. It was Domitian who has the credit of putting this execrable form of Prostitution under ban, and if the law which he enacted to prevent it was not rigorously observed, we may, at least, believe that it halted the progress of these monstrosities. Martial addresses to the emperor this eulogy, which permits us to fill in the silence of historians on the Domitian law relative to lupanars; "The young boy, previously mutilated by the infamous art of the avid trafficker in slaves, the young lad no longer weeps the loss of his virility, and the indigent mother no longer sells to a rich procurer her son destined to Prostitution. That modesty which before your time had deserted the conjugal couch, has begun to penetrate into the retreats of debauchery."

Thus, under Domitian, they no longer castrated children to change

them into women for purposes of Prostitution, and Nerva confirms the edict of his predecessor; but this castration continued to take place, beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire, or at least outside of Rome, and slave merchants brought there incessantly young boys who had been mutilated in different manners, although this was proscribed by Roman jurisprudence, even while the law authorized the priests of Cybele to make eunuchs and masters to deprive their slaves, at least in part, of their virility. Three species of these unfortunates were known, all three being utilized for purposes of debauchery: the *castrati*, those who had preserved nothing of their sex; the *spadones*, those who had kept but the impotent sign, and the *thlibia*, those who had undergone, in place of surgical castration, the compression of a cruel band.

We find in the Latin writers but three descriptions of a lupanar and of what took place inside. One of these descriptions, the most celebrated, introduces us with Messalina into the obscene hole where she prostituted herself to the muleteers of Rome. "As soon as she believed the Emperor to be asleep," relates Juvenal in his admirable poem, which prose is incapable of rendering, "the august courtesan, who dared prefer to the bed of the Caesars the pallet of prostitutes, would rise up, accompanied by a single servant. Hiding her black hair under a blond wig, she enters a much frequented lupanar, drawing aside the botched curtain; she takes the cell which is her own; naked, her throat covered with a gilded veil, under the false name of Lysisca, inscribed on the door, she exposes the belly which she has brought you, noble Britannicus! She receives with a caressing air, all who enter, and she demands from them her wages; then, couched upon her back, she sustains the efforts of numerous assailants; finally, when the lenon dismisses the girls, she leaves tristfully; and yet, she still burns with desires which she has merely succeeded in irritating and, fatigued with men but not satiated, she hides her soiled face, her eyes weak and blackened by the lamp, and carries away with her the odor of the lupanar." The haughty indignation of the poet bursts forth in this picture and almost causes the obscenity to disappear. After Juvenal, it is something of a let-down to quote a simple commentator, Symphosianus, who has written, in the *History of Apollonius of Tyre*, that Greek romance filled with fables, which all the fables of history have worked over and rendered famous: "The young girl prostrates herself at the feet of the lenon; she cries: 'Have pity on my virginity and do not disgrace my body with a shameful sign.' The lenon calls the stew-

ard and says to him: 'let a servant maid come and adorn her and have written on a signboard: 'He who deflowers Tarsia shall give a half-pound of silver; afterward, she shall be given to every comer for one piece of gold' ". This passage would be still more valuable for the history of Roman manners, if we were more sure of the exact sense of the words *mediam libram* and *singulos solidos*, which established the special price of virginity and the common wage of Prostitution.

Petronius, in his *Satyricon*, has left us a very curious fragment, too important not to be quoted textually; it is the picture of a Roman lupanar: "Tired of running and bathed with perspiration, I come upon a little old woman who is selling peas. 'Tell me, mother,' I say, 'do you not know where I live?' Charmed with so naïve a question, she replies, 'Why should I not know?' She rises and starts to walk in front of me. I thought she was a soothsayer; but soon, when we had arrived in a very out-of-the-way place, this amiable old woman drew back an evil-looking curtain. 'It is here,' she said, 'that you must live' (*hic, inquit, debes habitare*). Even as I was telling her that I did not know the house, I saw people promenading alongside the new prostitutes and their signboards. I understood later, and even too late, that I had been brought to a house of prostitution. The detestable wiles of this cursed old woman! I covered my head with my robe and was about to flee through the lupanar to the opposite door (*ad alteram partem*).'" This last fact tends to prove that a lupanar had, ordinarily, two doors, the one by which one entered and the other by which one left, opening, undoubtedly, into two different streets, in order the better to conceal the habits of those that came there; one might conclude from this that it was bad for a man of reputation to frequent these places, despite the tolerance of Roman manners in this respect. It is certain, moreover, according to various authorities who confirm Petronius' statement, that one did not enter or leave a lupanar without having his face covered and hidden: some wore for this purpose a *cucullus* or hood, drawn down over the eyes; others wrapped their heads in their robes or their mantles. Seneca, in his *Happy Life*, speaks of a libertine who frequented bad places, not timidly, not with concealment, but even with his face uncovered (*in aperto capite*). Capitolinus, in the *History of Augustus*, shows us a debauched Emperor visiting the night taverns and lupanars, his head covered with a vulgar *cucullus* (*obtecto capite cucullo vulgari*).

As to the wages in the lupanars, it could not have been fixed, since

each girl had a signboard indicating her name and her price; the passage from Symphosianus, cited above, has misled commentators, who have sought to determine, each in his own manner, the rate which the lenon fixed for the defloration of Tarsia and the price current of her favors; for scholars are not in accord as to the value of the pound and the sou in antiquity. Symphosianus does not say, moreover, whether a pound in gold or a pound in silver is meant. In the first case it has been estimated that the half pound, called for on Tarsia's signboard as the price of her virginity represented 433 francs in our present currency, whereas it would be but thirty-seven francs and sixty-four centimes, if the lenon were speaking of a pound in silver. We have made other calculations and have arrived at other results. In our opinion, the price of the prelibation (*primae aggressionis pretium* is the word of scholars) would have been 150 francs; as to the tariff on the following *stuprations*, the learned Pierruges estimates them at 11 francs, 42 centimes for the golden sou and 78 centimes for the silver sou. We have found, in our calculations, that it was 20 francs.\* Moreover, there was nothing uniform about this wage, and since it was never subject to any administrative control, it varied in ratio to the reputation and merits of the one advertised on the signboard. However, there is, in Petronius, one precise detail, which enables us to learn the price at which a cell in a lupanar was rented: "While I was wandering," says Ascyletus, "through the whole city without discovering where my lodgings were, I was approached by a citizen of respectable air, who very obligingly offered to act as my guide. Entering, then, certain tortuous alleys, he led me to a bad place, where he made indecent propositions to me, drawing out his purse. Already, the mistress of the place had received an *as* for the cell (*jam pro cella meretrix assem exegerat*).” If the rent of a cell cost an *as* (a little more than a sou), it may be supposed that the rest was not paid for very dearly. As a matter of fact, when Messalina demands her wages (*aera proposcit*), Juvenal gives us clearly to understand that she was content with a little copper money. We have already spoken of those prostitutes who were only rated at two oboles and at a *quadrans*, which had caused them to be nicknamed respectively, *quadrantiae* and *diobolares*. Festus thus explains their name: *Diobolares meretrices dicuntur, quae duobus obolis ducuntur*. It was competition which had caused the wages of Prostitution to drop so low.

\*Translator's Note:—Between \$25 and \$30 in the one case, between \$3 and \$4 in the other.



## CHAPTER XVIII

IT WOULD be impossible to say at what period legal Prostitution was regularly established at Rome, or at what time it was subjected to police regulation, under the jurisdiction of the aediles. But it is probable that these magistrates, from the institution of their office, which dates back to the year of Rome 260, were concerned with imposing certain punishments for Prostitution on the streets, and with outlining on the subject a sort of jurisprudence in the interests of the people. Unfortunately, we are in possession of but few details regarding this jurisprudence, details doubtful or almost effaced, but which always permit us to appreciate its equity and wisdom. We may almost rest assured that none of the anticipatory provisions of the modern police with regard to women of evil life had been neglected by the Roman aediles. This popular magistracy had realized that it ought, while leaving to these degraded women the greatest possible liberty, to restrain them from indulging in a sort of brazen usurpation of the rights of good women; that is why it was concerned, above all, with giving Prostitution an official character. In inflicting upon it certain stigmata, by branding it with infamy in the eyes of all, in order to deprive its practitioners of the desire and the means of brazenly appropriating the privileges of virtue and of modesty, by refusing, in short, to tolerate a courtesan's being taken for a matron, it spared the matron from being taken for a courtesan. The first concern of the aediles was to force the courtesan to come before them and avow her infamous profession, by demanding of them the right to give herself openly to Prostitution with a legal authorization, which was known as the *licentia stupri*. Such is the origin of the registration of public women on the aediles' books.

We are in possession of no information as to the manner of their registration; it appears that every woman who desired to make a trade of her body (*sui quaestum facere*) was bound to present herself before the aedile and to reveal her shameful designs, which the aedile sometimes endeavored to counteract with a little good advice. If the woman persisted, she was set down as devoted from then on, to Prostitution. She indicated her name, her age, the place of her birth, the name which she had chosen for her new state in life and even, if

we are to believe one writer, the price which she adopted, once for all. Tacitus says, in Book II of his *Annals*, that this registration with the aedile of women who wished to prostitute themselves was of ancient origin, and that the Law thought it could not better punish these immodest ones than by forcing them thus to make a public avowal of their dishonor (*more inter veteres recepto, qui satis poenarum adversus impudicas in ipsa professione flagitii credebant*). But what was a restraint in the austere days of the republic became, under the emperors, a sport and a derision, when one sees the daughters and wives of senators claiming from the aedile the *licentia stupri*. We understand, moreover, what was the judicial utility of this registration. On the one hand, there was obtained, by this means, an authentic list of all the women who had to pay the State the tax for Prostitution, the duty attached as a sign of servitude to this shameful profession. On the other hand, in all the cases in which a courtesan failed in her duty to her profession, in the brawls, the quarrels, the differences, the scandals, the infractions and the derelictions of all kinds to which the shameful trade often gave rise, one had but to consult the records of the aedile in order to ascertain the civil status of the party involved. One learned, in this manner, not only the true name of the guilty party or the victim, but also the *nom de guerre*, *luparium nomen*, under which she was known to the world of debauchery. Plautus, in his *Poenulus*, speaks of these degraded creatures, who changed their names in order shamelessly to sell their bodies (*manque hodie earum mutarentur nomina, facerentque indignum genere quaestum corpore*). It was no less necessary to indicate upon the registers, the rate which the prostitute fixed for her services, for the learned Pierrugues has recorded this fact, however strange it may be, in his *Glossarium eroticum*: that one went before the aedile to debate the value of and payment for an act of Prostitution, as though it were a matter of bread or cheese (*tanquam mercedis annonariae, depretio concubitus jus dicebat aedilis*). The task of the aedile was, thus, a complex and, often, a very delicate one; but the aedile was equal to anything.

The registration of a courtesan for the *licentia stupri* was definitive, and a woman who had once received this stigma could never wash it away nor rid herself of it. She might renounce her scandalous profession and make a sort of honorable amends, by living chastely, by marrying, by giving birth to semi-legitimate children, but there was no power which had the authority to restore her wholly to her

former position and to erase her name from the archives of legal Prostitution. She remained, as we have already said, stigmatized by the mark that she had merited once in her life, under the impulse of necessity, of want or even of ignorance. And yet, according to the observation of the learned Douza, as soon as the prostitutes had abandoned their calling, they hastened to take their true names and to leave behind them their old names of the lupanar, the names which they had affixed to their signboards there. One jurisconsult, who does not cite his authorities, has assumed that every courtesan at the moment of her registration, took an oath before the aedile and swore never to abandon the ignoble profession which she was adopting of her own free will, without constraint and without repugnance; but the unfortunate ones bound by this oath would have been relieved of it, after a law of Justinian (*Novella LI*) had declared that such an oath was against public morals, and so, was not binding upon the imprudent one who had taken it. This vow of Prostitution, of which history affords a number of examples from the religious point of view, among others, the case of the Locrians, whose daughters swore to prostitute themselves at the next festival, if their fathers achieved a victory over their enemies—this vow to legal Prostitution has in it nothing of the unlikely and is even in harmony with that brand of infamy which was its immediate consequence.

The question has been raised why it was this matriculation of the meretrices took place before the aedile, rather than the censor, whose duties included the surveillance of public morals. Justus Lipsius, in his *Commentaries* on Tacitus, replies to this purely speculative question, by remarking that the aediles were charged with the inner policing of the lupanars, the wine-shops and all suspected places of Prostitution. It is on the subject of the jurisdiction of the aediles over these places that Seneca has this to say: "You will find virtue in the temple, in the forum, in the curia, on the walls of the city; but pleasure you will find, most often hiding itself away and seeking the baths and sweating-rooms, in the places where the aedile is feared (*ad loca aedilem metuentia*)." Justus Lipsius might have added, in order better to explain the competence of the aedile in matters of Prostitution, that the latter official was forced to include among the duties of his office the keeping of the public highway, *via publica*, which belonged, essentially, to Prostitution, and which was almost synonymous with it. "No one forbids going

and coming on the highway," says Plautus, alluding to the use which each might make of a public woman, with the understanding, of course, that he paid her. (*Quin quod, palam est venale, si argentum est, emas. Nemo ire quemquam publica prohibet via.*) The aedile, then, had charge of the policing of the street and everything that might be considered as its dependency; and so it was, the public places came under his jurisdiction.

At first, and Justinian states this expressly, women who gave themselves to Prostitution, without being registered with the aedile, and without having purchased the right to the free practice of their indecent profession, were subject to a fine and even to expulsion from the city, in case they were taken in a flagrant dereliction; but ordinarily, those who found themselves at fault, provided they were still young and able to earn something, would make overtures to some charitable soul of a lenon, who would take upon himself the task of paying their fines and looking after their registration, and who, by way of reimbursement, would make them work for his profit, by shutting them up in a house of ill-fame. Vagabond prostitutes, *erratica scorta*, were not, at this time, permitted at Rome, but it was necessary to blink at the fact that they were, as a matter of fact, numerous and of varied habits; it would have required an army of custodians to guard the streets and edifices, a senate of aediles to judge the derelictions, and a throng of lictors to beat with rods the guilty parties and to carry out the sentences imposed. The city of Rome contained a multitude of temples, statues and public monuments, such as aqueducts, hot baths, tombs and market places, etc., the architectural arrangement of which was only too favorable to Prostitution. There was, at every step, a somber vault under which, by night, a prostitute found a couch; every vaulted place (*arcuarius* or *arguatus*) served as an asylum to vagrant debauchery, which no one had the right to interfere with seeing that everyone had the right to sleep in the open air, *sub dio*. One might even infer, from a number of historical facts, that certain isolated places, in the neighborhood of certain chapels and certain statues, were the ordinary scenes of nocturnal Prostitution. Thus, we see Julia, Augustus' daughter, going to prostitute herself at a street corner, in front of a statue of the satyr Marsyas; and a place where this species of obscene sacrifice was accomplished was always an occupied one, from the time night had converted into a starry daïs the stone couch which



served as altar for the hideous rite. All that was needed was a statue of Priapus or of some guardian deity, armed with a whip, a stick or a club, to protect all the nocturnal evil-doers who came to seek refuge under his auspices and to find shelter in his shadow.

It was, then, but rarely that the aedile made use of rigorous measures with regard to offences of this nature; but on the other hand, he sometimes exercised a sufficiently troublesome supervision over the public houses which were dependent on his jurisdiction. He not only made constant investigations for the purpose of ferreting out crimes which might have been committed in these houses particularly subject to his surveillance, but he often assured himself, in person, that all going on within them was in conformity with the law. We have mentioned, more than once, suspect or infamous places which resorted to the jurisdiction of the aedile. It was in these places that Prostitution went into hiding, in order to escape the State tax, and it was here that the lenons indulged in the basest sort of negotiations. The aedile, preceded by his lictors, would run through the street at every hour of the day and night, enter wherever his presence might be useful, and make sure, with his own eyes, of the interior régime of these laboratories of debauchery. When the approach of the aedile was announced from afar, the women of ill-repute, gamblers, banished slaves and malefactors of all sorts would take to their heels, and at once, the wine shops, hostelries and houses of ill-fame would be emptied. This urban policing was the function of the plebeian aedile, on whom reposed the active duties of the office. The great patrician aediles, seated in their curule chairs, did nothing but judge those cases sent them by the tribunes, purely administrative in their nature. This division of powers and duties had been established naturally, about the year of Rome 388, when to the two plebeian aediles the senate added two curule or patrician ones. These latter, alone, wore a distinctive habit, the *roba praetexta*, made of white wool bordered with purple, whereas the others were only recognizable to their lictors, or rather, to their apparitors, a sort of usher who walked in front of them, opening doors and announcing the name and rank of the aedile. For an aedile might not enter a particular house except by virtue of his office and in the performance of his duty. There was much talk at Rome of the discomfort of a certain curule aedile whom a courtesan had had the audacity to resist, and who found he possessed no advantage over

the latter before the tribune of the people. Aulus Gellius reports this memorable arrest as he had learned of it in a book of Atteius Capito, entitled *Conjectures*. A. Hostilius Mancinus, a curule aedile, wished to be admitted, during the night, to the home of a prostitute named Mamilia; the latter declined to receive him, although he announced his name and prerogatives; for he was alone, without his lictors; he did not wear the *roba praetexta* and, what was more, he had no business as an aedile in that house. Irritated by encountering so much difficulty with a public woman, he threatened to break down the door and endeavored to do so. Mamilia, who was not over-alarmed by this violence, pretended not to recognize him and pushed stones down upon his head from a balcony (*de tabulato*). The aedile was wounded in the head. The next day he cited before the people the insolent Mamilia and accused her of having made an attack upon his person. Mamilia told how the thing had happened; how the aedile, in fact, had endeavored to force her door, while all she had done was to prevent him by dropping the stones. She added that Mancinus, coming from a supper-party, had put in an appearance under the influence of wine and with a crown of flowers on his head. The tribunes approved Mamilia's conduct, by declaring that Mancinus, in presenting himself at night, half drunk and crowned with flowers, at the door of a courtesan, had deserved to be disgracefully chased away. They forbade him thereafter to make pleas before the people, and the courtesan thus had the better of the aedile.

This curious fact would seem to prove that Mamilia dwelt in a special house which was beyond the jurisdiction of the aediles; for in these free-mannered places, directly subject to the aedile's authority, one would not have dared resist the official in question to this extent. These magistrates paid incessant visits to the baths and rubbing rooms, the wine-shops and hostleries, the bake-shops, the butcher-shops (*lanii*), the delicatessen-shops (*macellarii*), the barbers and the perfumers. They certainly would have been embarrassed if they had endeavored to pursue and punish all the cases of prohibited Prostitution which they met with on their visits. It was, above all, in the public baths that the most monstrous debaucheries secretly took place; and one might say that Prostitution always increased at Rome in proportion to the number of baths that were built. Publius Victor counted eight hundred baths,

great as well as small, in the environs of the city, and as it is known the rich citizens made a point of honor of founding, through their wills, a *piscina* or rubbing room, destined for the use of the people, there is nothing astonishing in the number of these baths, of which the largest accommodated not less than one thousand persons at a time. In the austere days of the republic, the bath was surrounded by all the precautions of modesty and mystery; not only the sexes, but even the ages were separated; a father did not bathe with his son who had reached the age of puberty; nor a son-in-law with his father-in-law; service was provided by men or women, according to whether the bath was destined, exclusively, for women or men. These establishments were not yet very numerous, and there were certain hours reserved for men and certain hours for women, who followed one another in the same basins without ever being able to meet. Cicero tells us that the consul having gone to Teanum in the Campania, his wife remarked that she would like to bathe in the baths reserved for men. And so, the quaestor caused all those in the bath to leave, and after a few moments of waiting, the consul's wife was permitted to bathe herself; but she complained to her husband of the delay she had met with, and also the unfitness of these baths. Thereupon, the consul ordered that M. Marius, the most distinguished man of the city, be seized and beaten with rods in the public place, as being responsible for this unfitness of the baths. It is probable that the consul's wife had reported to her husband something rather grave, and what makes us think this, is the fact that the same consul, going to Ferentinum, informed himself also of the character of the public baths there, and was so dissatisfied with these baths that he caused the quaestors of this little city, in which men committed shameful acts under pretext of bathing, to be punished with the lash.

The baths of Rome were not slow in coming to resemble those which the Romans had found in Asia; they were adapted to all sorts of lust and corruption, almost under the very eyes of the aedile, whose duty it was to see that morals were upheld, but who only concerned himself with material improvements, the effect of which was still further to corrupt manners through the introduction of effeminate habits. In the first place, the bath became a common meeting-ground for the two sexes, and although each of these had their basin or their rubbing-room apart, they still might see each

other, meet, speak together, form liaisons, make appointments, and the like. Each brought there his slaves, male or female, eunuchs or *spadones*, to take care of his clothes, depilate him, scrape him, perfume him, rub him down, shave him and do his hair. This intermingling of the sexes had certain inevitable consequences, so far as Prostitution and debauchery were concerned. The masters of the baths possessed slaves trained for all sorts of shameful service, who hired themselves to the public for different purposes. In the beginning, the baths were so dimly-lighted that men and women might bathe side by side without recognizing each other except by their voices; but soon, the light of day was permitted to enter from all sides and to play over the marble columns and the stucco walls. "In this bath of Scipio," says Seneca, "there were breathing spaces rather than windows, which permitted only enough light not to outrage modesty; but today, it is said the baths are caves, if they are not sufficiently open to receive the rays of the sun through great windows." This indecent illumination revealed nudity to the eyes of all and cast a splendor over the thousand forms of physical beauty. In addition to the great rubbing-room (*sudatorium*), in addition to the great *piscinae* of cold, tepid and hot water, in which one bathed promiscuously and upon leaving which one put one's self into the hands of slaves, *balneatores* and *aliptes*, the establishment contained a great number of halls for eating and drinking and a great number of cells in which one found beds for repose, as well as women and boys. Ammianus Marcellinus gives us a vigorous account of the debauchees of Domitian's court, surrounding the public baths and crying out in a terrible voice: "Where are they? Where are they?" Then, if they perceive some unknown *meretrix*, some old prostitute cast off by the plebs of the suburbs, some ancient she-wolf, with a body exhausted from fornication, they all hurl themselves on her at once and treat this poor wretch like a Semiramis: *Si apparuisse subito compererint meretricem, aut oppidinae quondam prostibulum plebis, vel meritorii corporis veterem lupam, certatim concurrunt*, etc. The aediles saw to it that no scandals took place in the baths, which had a military guard outside, although all sorts of disorderly practices might take place inside, noiselessly, without uproar or trouble of any kind. Prostitution tended thus to take on a decent and a mysterious air.

The public baths were much like the lupanars; their interior



organization varied, according to the sort of public which frequented them. There were gratuitous baths for the lower class; there were cheap baths, where the entrance fee was not more than a *quadrans*,\* two liards in our money; there were also magnificent baths where the aristocracy and the rich, even though the latter were freed men, met upon a footing of equality. All the baths opened at the same hour, the ninth, that is to say, about three hours after midday; at this hour, the public places, wine-shops, inns and lupanars also opened. All the baths were closed at the same hour, also, at sunset: *tempus lavandi*, one reads in Vitruvius, *a meridiano ad vesperam est constitutum*. The lupanars alone remained open all night. Legal Prostitution, beginning in full day, was prolonged to the following morning. As to Prostitution in the baths, it was merely tolerated, and the aedile pretended, so far as possible, to ignore it, so long as it did not assume a public character. The emperors came to the aid of the aediles in an attempt to obviate the horrible excesses which were committed in all the baths of Rome to which the two sexes were admitted. Adrian rigorously forbade this disgraceful mingling of men and women; he ordered that the baths for the two sexes be wholly separated: *Lavacra pro sexibus separavit*, says Spartianus. Marcus Aurelius and Alexander Severus renewed these edicts in the interest of public morality; but during the interval between these two reigns, the execrable Heliogabalus had again authorized the two sexes to meet in the baths. The servants, male and female, of the baths became, at need, the wretched instruments of recreation for both sexes, who came there to seek such recreation. Matrons did not blush to have themselves massaged, anointed and rubbed down by immodest bath attendants. Juvenal, in his famous satire on Women, portrays a mother of a family, who waits for night to take herself to the baths with her outfit of pomades and perfumes. She finds her pleasure in sweating with great emotion, as her tired arms fall under the vigorous hand of the masseur, while the latter, animated by this exercise, causes the organ of pleasure to vibrate under his fingers (*callidus et cristae digitos impressit aliptes*) and the loins of the matron to crack. One of Juvenal's commentators, Rigatius, explains for us the indecent technique of these *aliptes*, with a significance which is, happily, clear in the Latin: *unctor sciebat dominam suam hujusmodi titillatione et contrectatione gaudere*. He

\*Translator's Note:—About four cents.

then quite naïvely wants to know if this attendant was not an infamous rascal.

The aedile saw nothing of all this, so long as no one complained. The baths were free asylums of love, and of the most unclean pleasures as well. "Whereas outside," says the *Ars Amoris* of Ovid, "the guardian of the young girl watches over her habits, the baths, on the other hand, surely conceal her furtive amours (*celent furtivos balnea tuta jocos*)." The women must have been more interested than the men in preserving these privileges attached to the public baths; for some, it was neutral ground, a tutelary shelter, where they might without danger satisfy their senses; for the others, it was a perpetual market in which Prostitution was always for sale or purchase. Although the baths must have been closed at night, they remained open secretly, for privileged debauchees; outside, all was dark, while inside, all was light, and the baths, the suppers and the orgies went on always, almost without interruption. The trade of *lenocinium* was practiced on a vast scale in these places, and many came, under pretext of bathing, to speculate on behalf of another in the virginity of a young girl or a child. The habit of taking baths increased with both sexes, who resorted with a sort of passion to this means of gratifying the most debasing instincts and tastes; gazing upon their own nudity and that of others, revealed in the most obscene postures, and reveling as they felt themselves pressed and touched by the trembling hands of the attendants, they contracted, insensibly, a rage for new and unknown pleasures, to the pursuit of which they dedicated their entire lives, throwing their lives leisurely away in this impure Capua of the public baths. It was there that Lesbian love had established its sanctuary, and Roman sensuality improved upon the libertinism of Sappho's friends. These latter were always known as Lesbians, although they added nothing to the precepts of the feminine philosopher of Lesbos; but they took the name of *fellatrices*, when they reserved for men those ignoble caresses with which they had no fear of defiling their mouths. This was not all: these women taught their execrable art to children and slaves, known as *fellatores*. This practice became so widespread at Rome that we find one satirist exclaiming with horror: "Oh noble descendants of the goddess Venus, you soon will not be able to find any lips that are chaste enough to address your prayers to her!" Martial, in his epigrams,

comes back incessantly to this abomination, which provided a living for a throng of infamous ones, but which did not keep the aedile awake at night. We should not dare to translate the scorching epigram which the poet mentioned addresses to one of these vile beings, named Blattara; but it will be more convenient to quote one a little more decent respecting Thaïs, a *fellatrice*, who was then in the mode. "There is no one among the people, nor in all the city, who can boast of having had the favors of Thaïs, although many have desired her, although many have purchased them. Why then is Thaïs so chaste? It is because her mouth is not." (*Tam casta est, rogo, Thaïs? immo fellat.*) Martial does not condone the despicable *fellatores* whom he encounters; he detests and curses them all in the person of Zoilus: "You say that the poets and the advocates smell bad in the mouth; but that *fellator*, Zoïlus, stinks even more!" This infamous manifestation of lust was, under the emperors, so widespread at Rome that Plautus and Terence, who allude to the vice of the *fellatores*, seem by comparison to have nothing to say about it. But in the *Atellanae*\* where the pantomime overshadows the temerities of the dialogue, the authors constantly express, by means of a dumb show, the shameful mysteries of the art of the *fellator*.

Surely, the aediles must have been blind in the presence of these horrible debaucheries, which took place under their very eyes! It was not even Prostitution, properly so-called; these were but its preludes or accessories; it was, above all, the most characteristic act of slavery, this act known as *præbere os*, according to the usual expression to be met with even in the *Adelphi* of Terence. The aediles did not concern themselves with the individual conduct of slaves, except in what concerned the *meretrices*. It is a remarkable fact that these ignoble artisans of debauchery were almost never a part of the registered *college* of courtezans. One did not meet them, therefore, in the lupanars, but in the wine-shops and in all the suspect places where one went to eat, drink, gamble or to sleep. Whoever entered one of these places, frequented by those who had lost all self-respect, found himself of necessity one of them or degraded to

\**Translator's Note*:—Of the *Atellana fabula*, or *Atellana*, Andrews (Latin-English Lexicon) has this to say: *A comic but not wanton kind of popular farce, that originated in Atella, which, with the comedy borrowed from Greece, was highly relished at Rome, especially by the youth, and continued to be represented even to the time of the emperors. Atella was an ancient town of the Osci in the Campania.*

their level, even though he himself was not addicted to all their customary vices. The mere presence of a man or woman in a tavern (*popina*) was sufficient to subject this man or woman, in a manner, to every sort of outrage. The jurisconsult, Julius Paulus, says, in the *Digest*: "Whoever shall make a plaything of my slave or my son, even with his consent, shall be looked upon as having done me a personal injury, as though my son or my slave had been led into a wine-shop or caused to play a game of chance." The injury and the damage existed from the moment the young man had set foot in the wine-shop, for he was never sure of leaving as pure, as chaste, as he had entered it.

The aedile's police kept a close watch over the wine-shops, which had to be closed during the night and were not to be opened till daybreak; the proprietors might receive all sorts of people, without making any inquiry as to their guests, but they were not authorized to give the latter a lodging, and the inns were supposed to be emptied when the bell had announced the hour of closing for the baths and all public places. This fact alone shows us the manner in which a Roman *popina* was conducted. The *popina* consisted generally of a small low room, furnished with amphoras and great jars filled with wine, on which was to be read the year and name of the vintage; at the further end of this damp, dark room which received no daylight except through a door surmounted by a laurel wreath, were one or two very small rooms which served for the accommodation of guests who remained to gamble and commit debauchery. There was no appearance of a bed, otherwise, in these holes, noisome with the odor of wine and the smell of lamps. "The inns," says Cicero, in a passage which clearly establishes the difference between the *popina* and the *stabulum*, "the inns are his bedroom, while the taverns are his dining-room." In these places were to be found nothing but benches, stools and tables, which were not well adapted to Prostitution as commonly practiced.

It was necessary to go into the *cauponae* and into the *diversoria*, in order to rent a room and a bed. The *diversorium* was destined only for travelers and strangers, who spent the night there without supper; the *caupona* served, on the contrary, as inn and wine-shop: one both lodged and supped there. Companions of both sexes were not lacking, for the proprietor of the place always had them in reserve for the use of his guests. Prostitution in these overnight



houses was more decent and less eccentric in its habits; and yet the aedile often came there to pay nocturnal visits, in order to hunt out women of an evil life who had evaded registration and those who had practiced their trade outside the lupanars. These women would flee, half naked, and hide themselves in the cellar, behind the amphoras of oil and wine; they would take to hiding under the beds, when the aedile's apparitor had knocked at the street door, and when the lictors had deposited their fasces in front of the house. The object of these domiciliary visits was, above all, to punish infractions of the regulations by heavy fines. As Seneca says, all the suspect places feared the aedile, being all more or less devoted to Prostitution. Seneca, in his *Happy Life*, speaks with disgust of this shameful pleasure, which had for asylum the gloomy vaults and the wine-shops (*cui statio ac domicilium fornices et popinae sunt*). The aedile visited, also, the bakeries and the cellars which were attached to them. In these cellars, sometimes deep-dug and back from the street, not only were there provisions of wheat in enormous vases of terra cotta, not only was there a mill turned by slaves; there were also subterranean cells, in which Prostitution took refuge during the day, at the hours when the lupanars were closed and inactive. "The *meretrices*," says Paulus Diaconus, "dwelt ordinarily in the mills (*in molis meretrices versabantur*)."<sup>\*</sup> Pitiscus, who quotes this passage, adds that the mills and the women were to be found in cellars communicating with the bakery, and that it was evident that all those who entered there did not come to purchase bread; the majority came there with no other object than debauchery (*alios qui pro pane veniebant, alios qui pro luxuriae turpitudine ibi festinabant*.) This was a disorderly sort of Prostitution which the aedile did not fail to run down; he often descended into these subterranean cavities where the wheat was crushed by pounding or grinding, and he would always discover a throng of unregistered women, some employed in working the mills, while others were the regular tenants of these dark holes, in the depths of which debauchery appeared to clothe itself in the shadows of its own deserved ignominy.\*

<sup>\*</sup>*Translator's Note*:—If bakeshops in the cinquecento did not preserve still this character, we at least find Roman bakers and their wives still looked upon as rowdy persons and, as such, proper material for comedy. Cf., e.g., "Arcolano, a Baker (Fornaio)" and Togna, his wife, in Aretino's comedy, *La Cortigiana* ("The Courtesan"), *Works of Aretino*, Putnam Translation, Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926.

The lupanars were likewise under the immediate surveillance of the aediles; but the latter were not at all concerned with what took place in them, provided there was no tumult, no brawl, no scandal within or without, provided the doors were open at the ninth hour, that is to say, at three hours after midday, and closed the following morning at the first hour. To the *leno* or the *lena* were, to so speak, confided a part of the aedile's duties in the administration of the establishment. Since it was the business of the proprietor of either sex to keep a record of each of the women, it was upon this individual, naturally, that the duty fell of verifying the registration of each on the aedile's books; he or she was responsible for an infraction of the law, when an *ingenua* or free woman citizen or a married woman turned adulteress, when a girl subject to the authority of father or guardian or when an unfortunate child prostituted herself, of her own will or from compulsion; for the Julian law included in the penalty for the crime all the accomplices who had had a part in it, even indirectly. The masters and entrepreneurs of the houses of ill fame had, therefore, frequently to account to the aedile, all the more for the reason that their trade respected nothing, neither birth, rank, age nor virtue. Every infraction of the rules occasioned a fine, and fines of this nature, which the aedile inflicted at will, were payable at once. A delay in payment brought down upon the shoulders of the condemned one a liberal supply of lashes. This fustigation was executed in the open street, in front of the lupanar, and following it, the culprit, after having paid his fine, would leave the lictor's hands in a bruised condition to seek the means of reimbursing himself in order to start a new traffic in Prostitution. Anything might be the occasion for reprimand or punishment. The proprietors of the lupanar felt that they were too much at the mercy of the aedile to overlook the necessity of providing, in case of mischance, some influential patron to fall back upon; they would find this patron among the debauched senators, for whom they reserved first pick among certain of their choice subjects. The aedile himself was not incorruptible, and the lenon knew by what sort of present one might sometimes win him over and get his favor.

It would be difficult to establish the nature of the infractions and violations which took place in the lupanars of Rome; it was undoubtedly not the aedile himself who performed the task of

determining these; he was represented by subordinate officers. The latter would go to inspect the management of the houses, to listen to and receive complaints which might be made against the proprietors, to examine the places and, above all, to revise on the premises the list of *meretrices*. The object of the legislator with regard to public debauchery appears to have been merely to prevent the Prostitution of patrician women and of free-born girls and to pursue the adulteress even under so infamous a mask. To the lupanars might be admitted, under guaranty of the law, only those women whom the law did not forbid to sell and prostitute themselves. Messalina, in practicing *meretricium* in a lupanar passed herself off as Lysisca, a courtesan whose *nom de guerre* she had taken, and who was probably carrying on her own trade elsewhere. Messalina thereby exposed herself, if not to being recognized, at least to being accused of the usurpation of the name and status of another, since only the women registered with the aedile had the right to practice in the lupanars. Seneca, in two different passages of his *Controversies*, speaks of the installation of a woman in a bad house, without indicating the various formalities which she had previously been forced to undergo. "You have been given the name of *meretrix*," says Seneca. "You are seated in a public house; a signboard has been placed above your cell, and you give yourself to every comer." And elsewhere: "You are seated with the courtezans; you are similarly adorned to please the passers-by, dressed up in a costume which the lenon has furnished you; your name has been placed above the door; you have received the price of your shame." It is certain that the lenon did not rent costumes and a cell to all the women who presented themselves; the latter were obliged, first of all, to establish their rank and even to produce a prostitute's certificate. Another passage from Seneca's *Controversies* gives us to understand that this certificate was delivered in the lupanar itself, and that the lenon kept a register on which were inscribed the names of his clients: "You have been led into a lupanar," says Seneca, "you have taken your place; you have made your price, and the signboard has been reversed in consequence. That is all which is to be known of you. Moreover, I prefer to be ignorant of what you call a cell and an obscene couch of repose." The aedile's assistants had no hesitancy, at need, about demanding the most minute details and interrogating the *meretrices* themselves.

The aedile was especially severe with regard to infractions of the opening and closing hours of the lupanar; for these hours had been fixed in order that the youth might not go to these places of debauchery in the morning and there fatigue and enervate themselves, in place of pursuing their gymnastic exercises, their scholastic studies and those civic lessons which made up a Roman education. The legislator had also desired that the heat of the day might be an obstacle to Prostitution, and that those who were overcome by this heat might not be tempted to seek an excess of perspiration and lassitude in these places. There was no exception with regard to the hours assigned for the free practice of pleasure in these public places, except on the solemn festival days, when the people had been invited to the games of the Circus. On those days, Prostitution betook itself where the people were, and while lupanars remained closed and deserted in the city, those of the Circus were opened at the same time as the games; and under the seats, packed with a throng of spectators, the lenons would set up little cells and tents, into which there flowed from all sides a continual procession of courtezans and of libertines whom they had attracted. While the tigers, lions and other ferocious beasts were gnawing the bars of their iron cages; while gladiators were fighting and dying; while the crowd shook the immense edifice with its cries and hand-clappings, the prostitutes, in their own special seats and distinguishable by the height of their coiffures and by their short, light and revealing garments, were constantly appealing to the desires of the public and did not wait till the games had finished to satisfy those desires. These courtezans were constantly leaving their seats and following one another out during the whole course of the spectacle. The exterior porticoes of the Circus, being no longer sufficient for this incredible traffic in Prostitution, all the wine-shops, all the hostleries in the neighborhood, were to be found belching with people. It is to be understood that on those days Prostitution was absolutely unrestrained, and that the aedile's apparitors did not dare to make any inquiry as to the rank of the women who performed the function of *meretrix*. That is why Sallustianus, in speaking of these great popular orgies, said: "They pay a cult to Minerva in the gymnasium, to Venus in the theater." And elsewhere: "All forms of immodesty are there practised in the theaters; all sorts of disorders take place in the palaestra."



Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymology*, goes still further by asserting that the theater is synonymous with Prostitution, for the reason that upon the same spot, after the games, the *meretrices* prostitute themselves publicly. (*Idem vero theatrum, idem et prostibulum, eo quod post ludos exactos meretrices ibi prosternerentur.*) The aediles, therefore, were not concerned with such Prostitution; it was as though Prostitution were a necessary part of the games given for the people. Generally, however (one might at least suppose so from a number of passages in the *History of Augustus*), the theaters were exploited by a species of women who lodged under the porticoes and in the galleries of these edifices; they had for lenons or for lovers the hucksters, who were to be seen incessantly circulating from one row of seats to another during the performance; these hucksters did not limit themselves to selling to the people, or distributing to them gratis, at the expense of the great person who was giving the games, supplies of water and chick peas;\* their chief business was to act as messengers between the parties to debauchery. It is, therefore, with reason that Tertullian calls the Circus and the theater the consistories of public lusts, *consistoria libidinum publicarum*.

It is probable that the aedile, despite his almost absolute authority over the public highway, did not interfere with vagabond Prostitution; we discover, in the poets and moralists who speak of this abject variety of Prostitution, no sign of any repressive or preventive measures. The aedile, undoubtedly, limited himself to seeing that the rules relative to costume were observed, and he severely punished the registered *meretrices* who had ventured into the streets with the long robe and fillets of matrons; but he could not have kept a very close watch over manners in the public highways, when night had dropped its indulgent veil. The highway belonged to all the citizens; each one had a right there, and each one found protection there by placing himself under the safeguard of the people. It would, therefore, have been difficult to restrain a citizen from making use of his individual liberty in the open streets. Thus, the aedile, at the period of his greatest power, exercised no coercive action against the passers-by who soiled with their urine the exterior walls of houses and monuments. He had recourse, in such a case, in the interest of the health of Rome, to the intervention of the god Aesculapius, and he painted two serpents on those walls which had been particularly

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. Horace, *Ars. Poetica*, 249: *fricti ciceris.....et nucis emptor*.

devoted by custom to receiving these unclean deposits. These sacred serpents warded off misconduct which otherwise was not even abstained from in the presence of the aedile himself; but following such a precaution, care was taken not to commit a profanation, since the serpent was the emblem of the god of medicine. There was, unfortunately, no serpent which vagabond Prostitution had to fear under the vaults and in the dimly-lighted nooks to which it fled, as soon as a street had become dark and less frequented. Pitiscus, who does not state a fact without backing it up with proofs drawn from the writings and monuments of antiquity, pictures for us the prostitutes of Rome, occupying by night the street corners and narrow streets of the city, calling to and attracting passers-by and conducting themselves with no more modesty than dogs: *Quos in triviis venereis nodis cohaerere scribit Lucretius*. The aedile could do no more than regulate as best he could the practices which took place in the quarters of ill fame where decent folk never went, and which had for inhabitants only thieves, beggars, fugitive slaves and women of evil life. The police avoided stirring up these dregs of the population, and a theft, murder or a case of incendiarism was necessary in order to cause the aedile's officer to enter these dubious resorts. The public highway, in the suburbs and within the walls of the city, became thus the scene of nightly depravities. It was there that Catullus met one evening that Lesbia, whom he loved better than himself, better than all he possessed; but if he recognized her, how changed she was, and what a horrible trade she was now practicing, under the impunity of darkness! He turned away indignant, his eyes clouded with tears and wishing he had seen nothing; then, the poet's heart uttered this lament:

*Illa Lesbia quam Catullus unam  
Plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes,  
Nunc in quadriuiis et angiportis  
Glubit magnanimos Remi nepotes!\**

If the aedile often left in peace the wretched instigators of public immorality, he concerned himself still less with the conduct of their

\**Translator's Note*:—"That Lesbia whom alone Catullus loved, more than himself and all the others dear to him, now at the street-corners and in the alleys—is engaged in fleecing (literally: skinning, peeling) Remus' great hearted descendants."

accomplices; he on the whole exercised no censorship over public morals, and he was careful not to offend the privileges of Roman citizens under the pretext of preserving decency in the street. In this respect, he merely heard complaints which were laid before him, in which case he would cite directly before him those who had given rise to these complaints. The complaints were sometimes very grave; for example, when a mother of a family complained of having been insulted and treated as a courtesan, that is to say, followed and called after in the streets. The aedile then had to determine whether, by her costume, her gait or her bearing, the matron might have provoked the insult, in which case the one who perpetrated it might argue as to his own ignorance and good faith. As a general rule, the women who would have had a right to complain to the aedile's tribunal preferred to spare themselves the scandal of such a public appearance and not to show themselves in public in order to have the one who had insulted them condemned, especially if they felt that they themselves were to blame in the matter of their toilet; for a head-dress too high, a neck, shoulders or throat too bare was all that was necessary to justify such a provocation. "To call after and to pursue are two quite different things," says Ulpianus, Section XV, *De injuriis et famosis libellis*; "to call after is to offer an affront to the modesty of others by insinuating words; to pursue is to follow with insistence, but silently." When libertines were in doubt as to the character of a woman whom they had encountered, and whom they desired, they would not speak to her at first but would follow her until she had given sign by a wink of the eye that such pursuit was not insulting or disagreeable to her; they then felt authorized to make verbal propositions. One did not accost, in the open streets, a foreign woman, unless she had responded, by voice, look or gesture, to the first tentative appeal; and this custom remained an established one in Roman cities long after public corruption had relaxed the rigors of the law. "The woman who speaks publicly," says Prudentius, in his *Moral Quatrains*, "is directed to halt at the turn of the street." The *meretrices* alone were, in a manner of speaking, at the discretion of the first comer; each passer-by had the right to stop them in the street, as though this were a merchandise offered to anyone who was willing to pay for it at the fixed rate.

Beyond the case in which the *sectator*, out of libertinism or error, permitted himself to pursue or call after an *ingenua* whose gait and

dress did not justify such an approach, the quest of debauched pleasures was absolutely unrestrained to all men except the young. These latter alone might be punished by their father or their guardian; for the law permitted a renouncement of paternity in three cases, in which the father had the right not only to disinherit his son, but even to expel him from the family and to deprive him of his name: first, if the son had slept beyond the paternal walls; secondly, if he had taken part in infamous orgies; and lastly, if he had plunged into unclean pleasures. It was, then, the father who, under certain circumstances, united the powers of the aedile and the censor in dealing with his debauched son. The guardian also shared the same authority with regard to his ward. But the young were not the only *sectatores* of Prostitution; men of more advanced age, bearded and serious minded, were often to be found amid that indecent throng which did not wait for night to fling themselves into debauchery. The aedile would often have blushed at the great names and noble characters which might have been found under the capes of these inmates of evil places! There were also many different degrees among the ones who made up the active army of Prostitution; some were called *adventores*, for the reason that they came to women and girls who seemed to them to offer the least resistance; the others were called *venatores*,\* for the reason that they purchased, without having the money in their hands like the others, everything which promised them a new *prey*. *Alcinoi juvenus* (youth of Alcinous) was the name given to those handsome effeminates who promenaded nonchalantly through the city in festival habit, curled, perfumed and adorned, ogling with their eyes, here and there, anyone that might awaken their desires, exhausted by a night of excess. The *salaputii* were little fellows, very ardent, very lubricious, who did not look the part, but who had good reason for calling themselves the heirs of Hercules. Horace boasted of being one of the best equipped in this line of succession, and the Emperor Augustus had nicknamed him on this account *putissimum penem*, which the poet himself translated by *homuncionem lepidissimum* (swank little chap)! The *semitarii* were a species of satyr, with wide shoulders, thick and muscular necks, robust arms, a timid look and a crafty air; they would set up their ambushes at the crossroads, on the outskirts of the woods, in the middle of the fields, and there they would wait for some wretched prostitute to

\*Translator's Note:—*Venator*: hunter.



pass; they would take possession of her by force, and despite her cries and struggles, they always came off very cheaply. Since they made advances only to women reputed to be common, the law regarding insults could not be applied to them. And the unfortunate victim, rising up bruised and dusty, found only laughs and puns waiting to console her for her misadventure. Finally, every married man who entered a lupanar became an adulterer (*adulter*); the one who frequented places of debauchery was a *scortator*;<sup>\*</sup> the one who lived familiarly with courtezans, who ate with them and dishonored himself by their company was called *moechus*.<sup>\*\*</sup> Cicero accuses Catiline of having formed a pretorian cohort of *scortatores*; the poet Lucilius states that a married man who commits an infidelity toward his wife incurs also the penalty of an adulterer, since he is an adulterer in name; and an old scholiast of Martial gives us to understand that the word *adulter* was applied to an adulterer by accident or occasion, whereas the word *moechus* expressed, especially, the habit, the normal state, of the adulterer. The Latin language loved diminutives as much as it did augmentatives; it had thus augmented the substantive *moechus* into *moechocinaedus*, which included in a single word several sorts of debauchery; it had at the same time sought the diminutive of the verb *moechor* by coining from it *moechisso*, which signified, very nearly, the same thing, with a little more delicacy. But the Greek language, from which *moechus* had been taken, possessed ten or a dozen different words, formed from the same sources, to express the nuances and variations of *moicheno* and of *moichos*.

No man who retained his self-respect repaired to places of Prostitution except with his face hidden and his head wrapped in his mantle. No one had, moreover, the right to call him to account for the disguise which he saw fit to assume. Thus, when Heliogabalus went by night to visit the bad houses of Rome, he only entered them covered with the cape of a muleteer, in order not to be recognized: *Tectus cucullione mulionico, ne agnosceritur, ingressus*, says Lampridius. The aedile himself was not permitted to raise his hood, which would have indicated that he was the emperor; but he caused very rigorously to be observed, especially by day and on the public highways, the sumptuary ordinances which forbade to registered *meretrices*

<sup>\*</sup>*Translator's Note*:—"Whoremaster."

<sup>\*\*</sup>*Translator's Note*:—In Latin, "fornicator" or "adulterer;" the Greek original, *moichos*, has in addition the sense of "paramour" or "debaucher."

the use of the stole or long robe, fillets for the head, purple tunics and even, at various times, embroideries and golden jewelry. These ordinances of the Senate were renewed by the emperors at various periods, but their application was sometimes relaxed in the hands of the aediles, who did not punish equally all infractions. Thus, at the theater and the Circus, great courtezans were frequently to be seen clad like queens, gleaming with gold and precious stones; they did not readily submit to wearing yellow togas and tunics and flowered dalmatics. "Who wears flowered vestments?" asked Martial, "and who permits *meretrices* to affect the modesty of a matron clad in the stole?" A woman who vowed herself to Prostitution was shorn of the rank of matron and renounced the right to appear in public with the toga and the other insignia of decent women; her registration on the books of the aedile had rendered her unworthy of the long and flowing, so-called matronly, toga. Thus, Martial makes a jest upon the occasion of gifts being sent to a prostitute (*moecham*): "You give robes of scarlet, purple and violet to a famous courtesan! You want to give her the present she deserves? Send her a toga." The toga, in the beginning, had been common to the two sexes; but after the invasion of the republic by foreign women had necessitated the adoption of a garb peculiar to matrons, the latter had taken a stole, which fell in long folds to their ankles and which hid their throats so modestly that the form was barely to be descried under the wool or linen. The toga, or tunic without sleeves, remained the garb of men, and, at the same time, of women who had lost the privileges of their sex, along with the rights and honors reserved for matrons. Such was, probably, the principal rule of costume which the aediles endeavored to enforce.

There were many less important prohibitions and prescriptions concerning the dress of *meretrices*, but they were modified so often that it would be difficult to determine them in a general manner and to assign them to a certain period. The footgear and headgear of courtezans had been regulated like their other clothing; nevertheless, the aedile was less rigorous with regard to these parts of the toilet. Matrons having been accorded the use of the sock (*soccus*), courtezans were not permitted to put it on, being obliged always to go with their feet bare, in sandals and slippers (*crepida* and *solea*), which they bound over the ankle with gilded thongs. Tibullus takes pleasure in depicting the little foot of his mistress, compressed by the strap

which imprisons it: *Ansaque compressos colligat arcta pedes*. The nudity of feet among women was an indication of Prostitution, and the startling whiteness of the courtesan's feet performed from afar the office of pimp, by attracting lascivious glances. Sometimes, their sandals or their slippers were gilded all over. *Auro pedibus induto*, Pliny says, in speaking of this resplendent mark of dishonor. Sometimes, to imitate the color of gold, they were content with yellow slippers, although these originally had been the property of brides. "Wearing a yellow sock on her foot, which is white as snow," says Catullus. But brides were careful not to wear sandals or slippers, and the courtesans would not have dared to wear gold-colored socks.

Matrons also had adopted a hair-dress which they did not permit to be usurped by the courtesans; this was a large white fillet, which served, at once, as a support and ornament for the hair. This fillet was probably, in the heroic days of Rome, a reminiscence of the ones which had adorned the heads of heifers and sheep offered as sacrifices to the gods. The matron presented herself in the guise of a victim at the altars of Modesty, as though to recall the fact that the cult of the generative gods, in remote times, had received as an offering the tribute of virginity. It was not courtesans but chaste women who took to themselves the right to bind with fillets their smooth and glistening hair; to virgins was permitted a simple fillet, which made them recognizable, while the double one remained the exclusive appanage of matrons. "Away!" cries Ovid, in the *Ars Amoris*, "away with those slender fillets (*vittae tenues*), the sign of modesty! Away with the long tunic which covers half the feet!" This stole or long robe (*insista*), ordinarily bordered with purple at the bottom, was no less characteristic of a Roman matron than the bands which so graciously bound up her black hair and ringed tresses. Save for these single or double fillets, the courtesans were free to adopt the coiffure which pleased them best. We have said that they were in the habit of wrapping their heads in a *palliolum*, a half-mantle of cloth; but they were also in the habit of dropping a hood over the face, whereas the matrons went everywhere with faces uncovered and heads bare, to let it be understood that they had no cause for self-reproach, and that they did not blush to meet the glances of the public, which was their constant judge. These haughty Roman matrons, for a number of centuries, would have looked upon it as a dishonor to hide their hair, to powder it, or to alter its black hue;

they did not even consent to part it into tresses on the top of the head or over the temples, except for the purpose of distinguishing young and unmarried girls (*innuptae*), whose frizzed or curled locks had caused them to be nicknamed *cirratae*. The courtezans did not restrain themselves from copying the different kinds of head-dress adopted by the matrons and the *cirratae*, but they altered the appearance by means of various little touches; sometimes they would tint their hair a saffron color, sometimes they would redden it with the juice of beet; sometimes they would make it a pastel-blue, sometimes they would merely tone down the dark glow of their ebony tresses, by rubbing them with perfumed ashes; then, after the emperors had created a sort of divine aureole for themselves by sprinkling powder of gold in their hair, the courtezans were the first to appropriate a mode which they regarded as belonging to themselves and they would enthrone themselves, at the public festivals and solemn games, opposite the Caesars, their foreheads girdled with a gilded headdress like that of the goddesses in the temples. But this did not last for long, and powder of gold was forbidden them; whereupon, they replaced this powder with another, made out of dyer's weed, which shone less in the sun, but which was easier on the eye. Those who had been seduced by a desire for blue-colored locks powdered their hair in turn with pulverized stone. "May all the tortures of Taenarus punish the senseless one who has caused your locks to lose their natural shade!" cries Propertius. "Make me often happy, my Cynthia; by that you shall be beautiful and always beautiful enough in my eyes. When a foolish woman dyes her face and hair blue, does she think that this rouge is an embellishment?" The aedile made war on gilded headdresses among the courtezans; but he did not restrain them from tinting their hair blue or yellow; he even encouraged it, for these were their distinctive colors (*caerulea* and *lutea*): blue, by allusion to the sea foam which had engendered Venus and to certain fishes which were born at the same time with her; yellow, by allusion to the gold which was the veritable god of their indecent industry.

The aediles would have had too much to do if they had had to determine, judge and punish all the deliberate infractions which the *meretrices* permitted themselves; they closed their eyes on a number of petty offenses of this sort, which they condemned on the ground of feminine coquetry. But in general, the registered women



had no interest in passing themselves off as matrons, and they preferred to follow the foreign modes which were proper to them, and which drew from afar the attention of their clientele. And so it was, they preferred to wear vestments which did not even possess a name in the Roman tongue: *babylonici vestes* and *sericae vestes*. *Babylonici vestes* was the name given to a sort of dalmatic which fell down over the ankles and was hooked in front, made of painted, variegated or flowered cloth, with embroideries in a thousand and one hues. The courtezans of Tyre and Babylon had brought to Rome this national costume, this ancient livery of Prostitution. *Sericae vestes* were the ample robes of silken tissue, so light and transparent that, according to the expression of an eye witness, they seemed to have been invented in order to render more visible that which they pretended to hide. The courtezans of India dressed themselves only in this fashion; and under their gauze, one might behold them absolutely naked. "Silken vestments!" exclaims with indignation the chaste author of the *Treatise on Benefits*,\* "vestments of silk, if one may call them vestments, which leave no part of the body protected by modesty, clad in which a woman would find it hard to swear that she was not naked; vestments which one would say had been invented in order that our matrons might not have any more to show their adulterous companions in the bedroom than they show them in public!" Seneca was particularly averse to this Asiatic mode, for he comes back to it in his *Controversies*: "A miserable troop of servant maids is greatly grieved that this adulteress displays her nudity under a diaphanous gauze, and that a husband knows no better than the first stranger who comes along the secret charms of his wife!" The Babylonian robes, although more decent than the Tyrian tissues, which a Latin poet compares to a vapor (*ventus textilis*), were more generally adopted by the *meretrices*; for one had to be very sure of one's hidden perfections in order to make a complete show of them. This immodest exhibition, in any case, had to fear no reprimands on the part of the aedile, and the women, registered or not, who permitted themselves so airy a costume did not pride themselves on aping matrons. It was the same with those who clad themselves in the Babylonian manner, in Oriental dalmatics, which a decent woman would have blushed to wear in

\**Translator's Note*.:—Allusion to Seneca's *De beneficiis*. The author quotes, immediately following, from the *Naturales Quaestiones*.

public, and which were made up in the most resplendent and lively colors. "Painted stuffs, made at Babylon," says Martial, "and embroidered by the needle of Semiramis."

The courtezans who submitted docilely to the professional toga added to it the *amiculum*, a short mantle made of two pieces stitched at the bottom and fastened over the left shoulder with a button or a clasp, leaving a pair of openings for the arms. This *amiculum*, a gallant word equivalent to *little friend*, did not fall down over the figure but it had almost the same appearance as the *chlamys* of the men; it was the exclusive property of women of an evil life. Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymologies*, assures us that the destination of this vestment was so well known that a matron taken in adultery was forced to assume it, so that this *amiculum* might attract to her a part of the opprobrium which had been reflected on the Roman stole. This little mantle, which was called *cyclas* in Greek, and which had never impressed Greek women as being indecent, had undoubtedly been brought to Rome by the hetairai, who had conferred upon it their own infamy. The color of the *amiculum* appears to have been white, since this vestment was of linen; just as the toga worn above it, was almost always green, this color being that of Priapus, the god of gardens. The commentators have had much to say about the exact shade of this green: some have made it a pale, other a deep green; the latter have attributed to it a gilded reflection, the former a yellowish shade. However this may have been, this green (*galbanus*) had been taken up by libertines of both sexes to such a degree that the latter had come to be known by the nickname of *galbanati*, that is, clad in green; the epithet of *galbani* was applied to dissolute manners; and *galbana* was the name given to a fine satin stuff of pale green color. Vopiscus portrays for us a debauchee, clad in a scarlet *chlamys* and a green tunic with long sleeves. Juvenal shows us another clad in blue and green (*caerulea indutus scutulata aut galbana rasa*). Finally, there was such an affinity between the color green and the one who wore it that *galbanatus* had become a synonym for *giton* or *mignon*.\*

All the foreign modes belonged, by right, to the courtezans, who had lost the title of female citizens, and who, moreover, came, for the most part, from foreign countries. Their coiffure on state occasions

\*Translator's Note:—That is, the homosexual. Green appears to have been always a favored color with the species.

ions—for the hood or *cucullus* only served them of an evening or in the morning, going or coming from the lupanar—the coiffure which they wore, by preference, to the theater and public ceremonies, where their presence was tolerated—this coiffure, which long had been their particular property, was sufficient evidence that Prostitution had come from the Orient and that Rome had left it its national costume. Three kinds of head-dress were distinguished as belonging especially to the *meretrices* of Rome: the mitre, the tiara and the nimbus. The nimbus appears to have been of Egyptian origin; it was a band of rather wide cloth, bound about the head to decrease the height of the brow. The Romans, following the example of the Greeks, did not admire high foreheads in their women, and the latter sought to dissimulate their own, which were more elevated and prominent than those of Greek women; the nimbus, or frontal bandeau, was sometimes laden with golden ornaments, and its two ends hung down from each side of the head like the bandelets over the breasts of a sphinx. The mitre came, evidently, from Asia Minor, from Chaldea or from Phrygia, according to whether it was more or less conical in shape. The tiara came from Judea and from Persia. This tiara, made of brilliant-colored cloth, had the form of a cylinder and resembled the pointed domes of Indian temples; the mitre, on the contrary, affected the form of a cone, and sometimes that of a helmet or shell. Such was the Phrygian mitre, which painters attributed by tradition to the shepherd Paris, engaged in judging the three goddesses and presenting the apple to Venus. These mythologic reminiscences were sufficient justification for the adoption of this curved bonnet as the emblem of free choice and pleasure. As to the pyramidal mitre, it had two pendants like the nimbus, with a border about the forehead; after having been the ensign of the ancient kings of Persia and Assyria, it continued to crown with an immodest royalty the courtezans of Rome, who reigned, mitred or adorned with nimbi (*nimbatae* and *mitratae*) at the performances in the theater and at the games of the Circus, without paying any fine to censor or aedile. Later, the very name of this haughty coiffure became a contemptuous byword.\*

But the aediles, who suffered the *meretrices* to go clad, coiffed and shod like the queens of Tyre and Nineveh, still took a hand with these women who possessed no litter or other species of con-

\*Translator's Note:—In Aretino's time, we find the mitre a symbol of Prostitution.

veyance. Matrons alone had the right to be carried in vehicles, by horses or slaves, and they were very jealous of this privilege. In the first centuries of Rome, they had made use of a large cart, the invention of which was attributed to Carmentis, the mother of Evander; and since this conveyance, a sort of closed chariot mounted on wheels, was of great service to corpulent ladies incapable of walking, its inventress had been deified and given the task of presiding over accouchements. The Romans, at that time, did not tolerate ease and luxury, even among their women, and the Senate had forbidden the use of Carmentis' conveyances. The women, especially those who were pregnant, protested against this rather rigorous action of the Senate and formed a pact among themselves, swearing that they would decline their conjugal duties and would refuse to bear children for the fatherland until this order had been annulled. They repulsed their husbands so mercilessly that the latter besought the Senate to repeal the unfortunate law which had deprived them of their wives. The women, satisfied with their triumph, did honor for it to the goddess Carmenta, and erected a temple to her on the side of the Capitoline hill. Following this memorable event, of which Graevius has preserved a number of versions in his *Roman Antiquities*, the matrons were left in possession of their vehicles, which, however, had lost their wheels and which, in place of rolling along over a bumpy pavement, were now gently borne by men or horses. These vehicles were of two sorts, the *basterna* and the litter (*lectica*); the first, a stretcher borne by two gentle-paced mules, formed a sort of suspended closet, enclosed with glass: "An excellent precaution," says the poet who furnishes this description, "in order that the chaste matron, going through the streets, may not be profaned by the glances of passers-by." The litter, also covered and enclosed, was borne on the shoulders of men. Of this there were two forms and two sizes: the chair, *sella*, which could accommodate one person, and the *octophoron*, which swayed on the backs of eight bearers. In the one, the woman was seated; in the other, she was couched on cushions, and she had often at her side two or three traveling companions. Luxury took possession of these litters, as it did of everything which tended to render life soft and voluptuous: the litters were painted, and were gilded without and upholstered within with furs and silken stuffs. It was then that the courtezans conceived the desire to appropriate them for their own use.



They succeeded for the moment, but all the aedile did was merely to relax his severity by permitting a few exceptions, in the case of rich and favored ones. Under a number of emperors, famous *meretrices* were to be seen in litters. These privileged ones were not satisfied with the closed litter, which passed silently through the streets, giving no glimpse of the one within. This mode of transportation had to be still further perfected; the interior became a veritable bedroom; and as one commentator remarks, these litters were but perambulating lupanars. There were, moreover, open litters with curtains, the folds of which provided a lascivious allure-ment for the eye of the passer-by. Sometimes the curtains of leather or cloth were drawn, but the occupant would lift up the corner in order to see and be seen. The relaxation of manners had increased the number of litters at Rome, and, at the same time, had multiplied the advantages which elegant Prostitution found in them. The matrons themselves were no longer astonished at being confused with courtezans. "Then it was that our women, the Roman matrons," tristfully observes Seneca, "were exposed in their vehicles as though on the auction block!" Some sought adventure in this manner; others went to keep appointments. The litter would stop at the corner of a public square or in a side street; the bearers would set it down and stand guard over it; yet the portières were half open, and it was not long until some fine youth had entered the inviolable sanctuary. One never knew whether the litter were empty or occupied. The courtezans, moreover, set an example for the matrons; one no longer recognized the latter by their closed carriages; they were to be seen everywhere in the open chair, *in patente sella*, as Seneca puts it. A scholiast of Juvenal displays his imagination rather than his ability as a critic when he advances the theory that the women who prostituted themselves in these conveyances were called *sellariae*, in opposition to the *cellariae*, who were the inmates of the cells in the lupanars. Juvenal does not even say that one entered Chione's chair, when one felt a passing caprice to do so; he says on the contrary: "You hesitate to make the beautiful Chione descend from her chair!" But Pierre Schoeffer, in his treatise, *De re vehiculari*, is of the opinion that, under certain circumstances, the conveyance was transformed into a portable house of Prostitution. It was, undoubtedly, for this reason that Domitian forbade the use of the litter, not only to registered

*meretrices*, but to all women branded with infamy (*probosis feminis*).

The aediles had still other prohibitions to enforce with regard to these women; for it is certain that at different periods the purple and gold were forbidden to courtezans. But police regulations were of little avail against the tenacity of a sex which loves the toilet, and which resents being deprived of the coquette's accessories. A number of antiquarians would have it that there was a law at Rome by which the use of gold ornaments and precious stuffs was absolutely forbidden to women of evil life, except in the interior of places of debauchery and in the practice of their trade behind closed doors. If this law existed, it was not long in effect, or, at least, was the object of frequent violations, for the poets frequently picture for us the courtezans clad in purple and adorned with jewels. Ovid, in his *Remedia Amoris*, appears to have forgotten these rigorous laws, in describing the toilet of a courtesan, or at least of a woman of pleasure: "Precious stones and gold cover her from head to foot, so that her beauty is the least part of her worth." Plautus, in one of his comedies, puts on the stage a "gilded" *meretrix*, but he seems to imply that this was a new thing at Rome: *Sed vestita, aurata, ornata, ut lepide! ut concinne! ut nove!* Juvenal depicts for us a courtesan of the hostlery, her bare head covered with a gilded numbus (*quae nudis longum ostendit cervicibus aurum*); and yet, he is evidently alluding to the privilege which matrons had of being the only ones to wear precious stones and ear-buckles, in that verse in which he remarks that a woman who has emeralds at her throat and pearls in her ears will put up with everything and blushes at nothing:

*Nil non permittit mulier, sibi turpe putat nil,  
Cum virides gemmas collo circumdedit et cum  
Auribus externis magnos commisit elenchos.\**

Apuleius confirms this evidence of Juvenal: "The gold of her jewels, the gold of her vestments, here filed, there carved, announced at once that she was a matron." We know, nevertheless, that the Oppian law had forbidden the use of purple for all women, reserving it for the men. Nero renewed this prohibition, which was not defin-

\**Translator's Note*:—"There is nothing that a woman will not put up with, nothing that she looks upon as a disgrace, when she has encircled her neck with greenish gems and hung huge pendants in her ears."

itely lifted until the reign of Aurelius; but it had always existed for the courtezans and for those women reputed to be infamous, according to the opinion of an Italian scholar, Santinelli, who has not taken into consideration the fact that the ancients had several shades of purple and that one of these, the most brilliant, was the sign of power.\* The plebeian purple, or violet, was, certainly, not included under these prohibitory laws, which the emperors of the East emphatically limited to the imperial purple (*purpura*). Ferrarius, in his treatise, *De re vestiaria*, in order to reconcile these contradictory authorities, assumes that the courtezans had permission to wear gold and purple even in public, provided the purple was not in the form of hems on their garments and provided that the gold did not take the form of fillets for their hair. It would be better to assume that the regulations relative to courtezans underwent frequent variations, depending now upon the Senate, now upon the emperor and now upon the aedile, and that the influence of one of these sovereigns of a day, or rather, of one of their sweethearts, was all that was needed to cause the abandonment of ancient customs, which would have had the force of law under other more honorable influences. At Rome, as in all the cities where Prostitution was subject to police ordinances, the women of evil life, although tolerated and authorized, were a butt for rigorous measures which often resembled persecution, but which always had for object the repression of excesses and the correction of abuses in public manners.

\**Translator's Note*:—This was, rather, a scarlet.

## CHAPTER XIX

THERE was at Rome a form of Prostitution which certainly did not in any manner concern the aediles, so long as it did not usurp the prerogatives of the matrons with regard to vestments. This was what one might term voluptuous and opulent Prostitution, what the Latin tongue characterized as "good Prostitution" (*bonum meretricium*). The women who took part in this Prostitution were also called "good women" (*bonae mulieres*) in order to indicate perfection in kind; these courtezans, the fact is, might have been registered on the books of the aedile as foreign women, as freed-women or as musicians, but they nevertheless possessed no analogy with the unfortunate slaves of public incontinence; one never met them at the ninth hour of the day, their heads wrapped in the *pal-liolum* or hidden under a hood, scurrying to the lupanar or seeking adventures; one never surprised them, in the streets or at the street-corners, in a flagrant nocturnal debauch; one never found them in the hostleries, the taverns, the public baths, the bakeries and other suspect places; although they were branded with infamy like the others, one never blushed at being seen in public with them or of announcing himself as their lover, for most of them possessed privileged lovers, *amasii*, and these lovers were, in a manner, the more or less brilliant cloaks which concealed these ladies' mercenary amours. These women constituted the aristocracy of Prostitution; and just as in Greece, they exercised at Rome an enormous influence over fashions, manners and the arts, over letters and over all the circumstances of patrician life. But in no case did they possess any sway over politics or the affairs of state; they never took a hand, like the Greek hetairai, in public business or in government; they lived, always, beyond the confines of the forum and the Senate; they were content with the influence bestowed upon them by their beauty and spirit in the little world of gallantry, a perfumed, elegant and corrupt world, of which Ovid gives us the code in his *Ars Amoris*, and which had for poet-historiographers Propertius, Catullus and a throng of erotic writers, whom antiquity out of modesty appears to have relegated to oblivion.

These courtezans of renown came to resemble the hetairai at



Athens the more Rome came to resemble the city of Minerva; and the more nearly the Roman character approached the Athenian. But the descendants of Evander were too proud of their origin and of the majestic title of Roman citizen to accord to women, to foreign and infamous women, however amiable they might be, a cult of admiration and respect. A courtesan who desired to assume, or who had assumed, authority over a senator, over a magistrate or a military chief, would have brought dishonor on the one submitted to this shameful dependence, to this ridiculous conquest. The gravest men of the State, the most austere, did not deprive themselves of the pleasure of frequenting courtesans and of taking part in their intimate mysteries; Cicero himself supped at the house of Cytheris, who had been a slave girl before being freed by Eutrapelus, and who became the favorite mistress of the triumvir, Antonius. But these constant relations between the courtesans and the most considerable personages of the republic remained, ordinarily, circumscribed by the interior of a house of pleasure or a villa, where the curious eye of the people never penetrated. In the streets, on the promenade, at the circus and in the theatre, if courtesans in the mode, the *precious* and the *famous* ones (*famosae* and *preciosae*), appeared surrounded by a dense throng of admirers (*amatores*), these latter were young debauchees who thereby brought shame upon their families; they were freed men whose ill-gotten riches had not freed them from the stain of slavery; they were artists, poets and comedians who deliberately defied public opinion; or they were lenons in disguise, who, naturally, were seeking the most propitious occasions for traffic and lucre. Thus, among the Romans, the most triumphant courtesan never beheld about her any persons of ill fame, except at the suppers and *commesationes*, where she sometimes succeeded in collecting the first citizens of Rome, who, behind closed doors, abused the privileges of private life.

It was necessary to go of an evening into the Via Sacra, that daily rendezvous of lust, debauchery and pride, in order to perceive how numerous and how brilliant was that army of fashionable courtesans, which occupied Rome like a conquered city, and which could claim there more captives and victims than the Gauls of Brennus had made. They came there every day for a coquettish and insolent tournament with the matrons, whom they eclipsed with their charms and their attire. Sometimes, they were borne by

robust Abyssinians in uncovered litters, where they reclined indolently, half nude, a mirror of polished silver in their hands, their arms laden with bracelets, their fingers with rings, their heads bowed beneath the weight of their earrings, their nimbi and their golden ornaments; while by their side, pretty slave girls kept the air cool with peacock-feather fans; before and behind the litters walked eunuchs and children, flute-players and dwarf buffoons, who made up their retinue. Sometimes, seated upright in their light chariots, they themselves directed their swift horses and sought to pass one another as though they were running a race. Sometimes, they went mounted on fine coursers, which they rode with as much address as audacity, or on pretty Spanish mules, which a negro led by the bridle. Those who were not so rich, so ambitious or so turbulent, went on foot, all elegantly clad in vari-colored garments of wool or silk, all coiffured with art, their matted hair forming blond or gilded diadems, interlaced with pearls and jewels; some played with crystal or amber balls in order to keep their hands fresh and white; others bore parasols, mirrors, fans, when they did not have slaves to carry these objects for them; but each possessed at least one servant maid, who followed or accompanied her, as an indispensable emissary. These courtezans, it may be seen, were not all on the same footing of fortune and distinction, but they were alike in this one point, that they did not figure on the books of the aediles and that they found themselves, thus, exempt from police regulations relative to Prostitution; for they did not have a fixed price, a *nom de guerre* that was registered and recognized, in a word, the right to practice their trade in the public lupanars. They were careful not to seek from the aedile the degrading *licentia stupri*, but they vowed themselves to Prostitution just as though they had obtained the license. They were never disturbed in this respect, at least so long as they did not too openly flaunt the aedile's jurisdiction, by abandoning themselves promiscuously (*sine delectu*) in public.

These *meretrices* abounded in the Via Sacra and, if one is to believe Propertius, they did not go far away to give satisfaction to one who had given them a signal. "Oh! how well I love," he says in his elegy, "that freed-woman who goes with her robe half open, without fear of any Argus or any jealous eyes; who treads incessantly, with her dirty buskins, the pavement of the Via Sacra, and who does not wait if one shows any sign of going to her! Never does she raise any

fine points, never does she demand indiscreetly of you all the silver which an avaricious father frequently regrets having given to his son; she will never say to you: 'I am afraid; hurry up, I beg you!' (*Nec dicet: Timeol propera jam surgere, quaesol!*)" This street-walker of the Via Sacra, it may be seen, gained her livelihood in the light of day, without being any too much concerned with the aedile and the police laws. Propertius even seems to indicate that she barely took the precaution of leaving the Via Sacra, which began at the Amphitheatre and led to the Coliseum, running alongside the temple of Peace and the place of the Caesars. There were in the environs of the Coliseum enough groves, sacred or otherwise, in which vagrant lovers might meet only with statues and boundary-posts, which proved no disturbance. Otherwise, the baths, the inns, the wine-shops, the bakeries and the barber-shops always offered open asylum to anonymous Prostitution, of which the Via Sacra was the general rendezvous. Matrons came there also, the majority of them in litters or carriages, especially at certain periods when they had obtained the exclusive privileges of chairs and litters (*sellae* and *lecticae*): they did not affect, at this period of an unheard-of corruption, a bearing much more decent than that of the professional courtesan; they reclined, like the latter, on silken cushions, in a costume which did not render less immodest their fillets and the purple of their stoles, which fell in long flowing folds, as they went surrounded by slaves and eunuchs, bearing fans for chasing away the flies and sticks for parting the crowd. These matrons, these heirs to the greatest names of Rome, these wives, these mothers of families, to whom the law bowed in veneration, had speedily forgotten, under the emperors, the chaste and austere virtues of their ancestors. Those who appeared in the Via Sacra to display there the pomp of their toilets and the splendor of their retinue frequently had in view the choosing of a lover, or, rather, of a vile and shameful paramour. "Their old and ugly servant-maids," says M. Walkenaer in his fine *Life of Horace*, "complacently withdrew at the approach of young effeminate (*effeminati*), whose fingers were laden with rings, the toga always elegantly draped, their hair combed and perfumed, the face spotted with those little patches, by means of which our ladies of the last century sought to render their physiognomies more piquant. There were to be seen also, in these same places, men of athletic build, who appeared to display with pride their

muscular strength; their rapid and martial stride offered a complete contrast to the composed air, the slow and measured steps of the young lad with carefully curled hair and rouged cheeks, darting lascivious looks to one side and the other. These two species of promenaders were, most frequently, gladiators and slaves; but certain women of high rank chose their lovers from these low classes, whereas their young and pretty attendants kept themselves pure against attack by men of their own station, yielding only to the seductions of knights and senators."

We have quoted in its entirety this picturesque passage, the details for which have been taken by the learned academician from the pages of Martial, Aulus Gellius, Cicero, Seneca and Horace; but we regret the absence of many details of manners which Juvenal, the implacable Juvenal, would have been able to add to this picture of the promenades of Rome. "Noble or plebeian," cries this poet, in his terrible satire against the Women, "all are equally depraved. She who trails the mud of the pavement is no better than the matron, borne on the heads of those great Syrians. For her appearance at the games, Ogulnia rents a toilet, a retinue, a litter, a cushion, servant maids, a nurse and a young girl with blond hair, whose duty it is to take orders for her. Poor girl, she spends on beardless athletes what remains of her ancestor's money; she gives them the last she has. . . . There are some who are charmed only by the impotent eunuchs and their soft caresses; for thus they have no abortions to provide for." The satires of Juvenal and of Persius are filled with horrible prostitution which the Roman ladies indulged in almost publicly, the heroes of which incidents were infamous actors, vile slaves, shameful eunuchs and atrocious gladiators. Juvenal draws a frightful portrait of Sergius, the favorite of Hippia, wife of a senator: "The poor Sergius had already commenced to shave his throat (that is to say, he had attained the age of forty-five years) and having lost an arm was in a fair way to go into a retreat. Moreover, his face was covered with deformities; there was an enormous wen which, sinking down under his helmet, fell over the middle of his nose; his eyes were small and blood-shot and distilled incessantly a corrosive humor. But he was a gladiator; under that title these fellows became Hyacinths, and Hippia preferred him to her children, to her country, to her sister and to her husband, for it is a sword that women love." We see in Petronius the abominable rôle which the *obscene gladiator*



plays; but only the Latin is sufficiently daring to set forth all the mysteries of Roman debauchery. "There are women," says Petronius elsewhere, "who like to take their loves in the mud, and whose senses are only awakened at the sight of a slave or of a valet with a deformed foot. Others go insane over a gladiator, a dusty mule-driver, or an actor who parades his charms on the stage. My mistress is of this number; she frequents the seats of the senators, the fourteen benches of knights, and goes to seek at the top of the amphitheatre the object of her plebeian fires."

The Via Sacra, the porticoes, the Via Appia and all the promenade places of Rome were, then, frequented by the wretched practitioners of matronly prostitution, as well as by courtezans and women of easy manners; by the odious retainers of Venus Aversa as well as by libertines of all schools and all walks in life. But we must recognize the fact, in the presence of this variety of children and depraved men who made a show of their turpitude, that the courtezans appeared almost decent and respectable by comparison; the latter were not, moreover, as numerous or as brazen as these indecent hypocrites, as these unclean *gitones*, as these immodest *spadones*, as these effeminate of all ages who, curled, adorned, oiled and rouged like women, waited only for a sign or a signal to lend themselves to the most execrable traffic. The lenons, male and female, did not fail to lie in wait there, prompt and docile, for all sorts of bargains and negotiations. They did not limit themselves to carrying messages and love-letters; they acted as the direct intermediaries in fixing a price, in designating a place of rendezvous, in removing obstacles opposed to an interview, and in furnishing a disguise, a night-cape, a room, a litter, all that lovers might need. An old woman would approach a fine patrician and slip him, secretly, some ivory tablets, on the wax of which the stylus had engraved a name, a word, a message: it was a courtesan making approaches to a proud and noble descendant of the Catos and the Scipios. Suddenly, a Nubian would go touch the shoulder of an effeminate remarkable for his large earrings and his long hair; it was an old debauched senator, appealing thus to this man metamorphosed into a woman. Then, a robust water-porter who happened to be passing was desired by two great ladies who had remarked him simultaneously, and who were disputing as to who should be the first to sacrifice their honor to this fellow. "If the gallant failed them," says Juvenal, "they called their slaves; if

the slaves were not sufficient, they sent for the water-porter (*veniet conductus aquarius*).” A gesture, a look, a word, and gladiator, eunuch, child, would present himself and recoil from no variety of service. And the aedile, what was the aedile doing, while Rome was dishonoring herself thus in the face of Heaven by the vices of her leading inhabitants? And the censor, what was the censor doing, while public manners were losing all appearance of decency? Censor and aedile could do nothing where the law was silent, as though afraid of having too much to say. *Permitted* or *licit pleasures* was the name given in pagan Rome to everything which Christianity rejected as being in the realm of forbidden pleasures. It is, therefore, jokingly that Plautus causes one of the characters in his *Curculio* to say: “Provided you abstain from the married woman, from the widow, from the virgin, from youth and free-born children, love whatever you please!” Catullus, in the wedding-hymn of Julia and Manlius, adduces marriage as a moral restraint on these shameful habits. “It is understood,” says the poet of physical love, “that you, perfumed bridegroom, renounce with regret your effeminates (*glabros*); though we know that you have never made the acquaintance of any but permitted pleasures; but those pleasures a husband can permit himself no longer (*scimus haec tibi, quae licent sola cognita, sed marito ista non eadem licent*).” There was, therefore, nothing but philosophy with which to combat the outbreaks of this ignoble license, a license which found nothing to curb it in Roman legislation.

Part of the intrigues and communications which took place on the public highway were carried on by means of signs. It is a known fact that pantomime was an art very refined and highly complicated, which was especially studied in the theatre, and which was perfected in accordance with the use which was to be made of it. Hence the marvelous talent of courtezans in what constituted the mute language of Prostitution. There were also different dialects in this amorous pantomime. Occasionally, the most eloquent expression in this lascivious language would flash or burst forth in a look. If the eye was not understood by the eye, the movements of the lips and the fingers served as a most intelligible means of communication, though a less decent one, between persons who would sometimes have blushed to make use of a word. Thus the sign generally adopted by those who followed the most infamous masculine debauchery, consisted in the raising of a finger at the base of which the other

fingers of the hand dropped themselves into a fascicle by way of representing the shameful attribute of Priapus. Suetonius, in his *Life of Caligula*, pictures for us an Emperor who offers his hand to be kissed by giving it an obscene form and movement (*formatam comotamque in obscenum modum*). Lampridius, in his *Life of Helio-gabalus*, tells us that this monstrous debauchee never permitted an indecent word, even when the play of fingers indicated an infamy (*nec unquam verbis pepercit infamiam, quum digitis infamiam ostentaret*). These obscene gestures were executed with an astonishing rapidity which ordinarily escaped the gaze of the indifferent. One might suppose, from a number of passages in the *Life of Augustus*, that the *signum infame* was not tolerated under all the emperors, and that the most celebrated for their vices had attached a severe penalty to this sign, which gave to the middle finger the nickname of *infamous finger*. The Athenians, so far as that goes, had the same attitude toward this finger, which they named *catapygon*, and which they were ashamed to adorn with a ring. The *digitus medius* had been consigned to infamy in Greece because the villagers made use of it to know if their chickens had eggs in their bellies, which gave rise to the Greek word, *skimalizein*, invented expressly to describe the act of these villagers. "Be sure to mock, Sextillus," says Martial, "him who calls you cinaedus and offers you his middle finger." The presentation of this finger indicated, at once, a demand and a response, in the tacit language of these shameful debauchees. They had still another sign of intelligence, in which the middle finger changed its rôle: they would bring this finger to their head, either to the forehead or to the back of the head, pretending to scratch the head. "That which indicates the immodest one," says Seneca, in his fifty-second letter, "is his gait, is the movement of his hand, is his finger which he brings to his head, is the blinking of his eyes." Juvenal gives us reason for supposing that this scratching of the head with a finger had replaced, in the language of gesture, the elevation of the middle finger out of the closed hand. "Behold," he says, "behold flowing into Rome from all sides, in chariots, on vessels, all the effeminate who scratch their head with a single finger. (*Qui digito scalpunt uno caput*)." But the courtizans preferred to speak with the eye rather than with the finger, and nothing could equal the eloquence, the perswasion and the attraction of their sidelong glance (*oculus limus*). The grave rhetorician Quintilian would like

the orator to have, on certain occasions, gentle and voluptuous, sidelong and, so to speak, amorous (*venerei*) glances. Apuleius, in his erotic romance, portrays a courtesan who gives sidelong and mordant glances of the eye (*limis atque morsicantibus oculis*). This was what the courtesans called *hunting with the eye* (*oculis venari*): "Do you see her," says the *Soldier* of Plautus, "do you see her hunting, on the run with her eyes, and on the fly with her ears? (*Viden tu illam oculis venaturam facere atque aucupium auribus.*)"

This mute language, which the courtesans everywhere excelled in speaking and in understanding, had become so familiar to all the women of Rome that these latter possessed no other for affairs of pleasure. An old Latin poet compares this rapid exchange of looks, gestures and signs between a *preciosa* and her lovers to a ball game, in which a good player tosses back the balls which he catches with both hands. "She holds one," he says, "and makes a sign to the other; her hand is occupied with this one, and she presses the foot of the other one; she puts her ring between her lips and shows it to one in order to call another; while she is singing to one, she addresses others by a movement of her finger." The great master of the art of love, Ovid, in his poem written in the lap of courtesans, and often under their dictation, has placed in the mouth of one of his muses these lessons in amorous pantomime: "Look at me," says that clever *gesticularia*, "regard the movements of my head, the expression of my face; remark and repeat after me these furtive signs (*furtivas notas*). I will convey to you, by a movement of my eyebrows, eloquent words, with which the voice has nothing to do; you shall read these words of my fingers as if they were written down there. When the pleasures of our love come to your mind, touch gently with your thumb your rosy cheeks; if there is in your heart some echo which speaks of me, raise your hand to the tip of your ear. O light of my soul, when you approve of what I say or do, take your ring in your fingers. Touch the table with your hand, in the manner of those who make a vow, when you wish all the evils in the world to my cursed and jealous one." The poets are full of these tacit dialogues of lovers, and Tibullus, above all, praises the cleverness of his mistress in speaking by signs in the presence of an annoying witness, and in concealing tender words under an ingenious pantomime (*blandaue compositis abdere verba notis*). This universal language was all the more necessary at Rome for the reason that often one would not



have been able to make one's self understood otherwise, since the majority of courtezans were foreign women and did not find it expedient to speak their native language in the midst of this population, which had been brought together from all the countries of the known universe. A great many of these women of pleasure, moreover, had received no education and would not have created a pleasant impression by disfiguring the Latin of Cicero and Virgil, even though, according to a Roman poet, love and pleasure commit no solecisms. There was also, in the customary language of Rome, a singular reserve, which never permitted the employment of an obscene word or image. The writers, poets or prosateurs, even the gravest of them, made no pretense of adhering to this chastity of expression, as though the ear alone were wounded by what never offended the eyes. Yet they avoided, in the freest conversation, not only smutty words, but also combinations of words which might provoke a thought of indecent analogies. Cicero says that even if words do not smell bad, they affect disagreeably the hearing and the sight. "Everything that is good to do," according to the Latin proverb, "is not good to say. (*Tam bonum facere quam malum dicere*)."

Erotic Latin was, nevertheless, very rich and highly perfected; it had taken from the Greek all that it might appropriate without prejudice to its own native genius; it was incessantly developing and taking on animation by lending itself to all the libidinous fantasies of the amorous poets; it rejected barbaric neologisms; it preferred figures, allusions and words of double meaning, adopting as part of its own the vocabularies of war, shipping and agriculture. It had, moreover, properly speaking, but a small number of technical words, the majority of foreign derivation; it preferred to turn from their usual acceptation the most respectable and ordinary words, stamping them with its own seal by means of a trope which was often ingenious and poetic. But this language, which knew no reticences in the *Elegies* of Catullus, in the *Epigrams* of Martial, in the *Lives* of Suetonius, in the *Romances* of Apuleius, was not really spoken except at meetings of debauchees and in connection with intimate mysteries. It is a remarkable fact that the courtezans, anything but respectable in their toilet and in their manners, would have blushed to utter in public an indecent word. This modesty of language often prevented them from appearing to be what they were, and the poets, who ordinarily constituted their court, might, therefore, imagine

that they were dealing with virgins. The tender little names exchanged between lovers and their mistresses were not less conventional, less chaste or less innocent when the mistress was a courtesan and the lover an erotic poet. The latter would call her his rose, his queen, his goddess, his dove, the light of his life, and his star; she would respond to these gentle terms by calling him her jewel (*bacciballum*), her honey, her sparrow (*passer*), her ambrosia, the light of her eyes (*oculissimus*) and her pleasure (*amoenitas*); she never made use of her licentious interjections, but only of I love you! (*amabo*),\* a frequent exclamation which summed up a whole life, a whole vocation. As soon as intimate relations had been established between persons of opposite sex, they called each other *brother* and *sister*. This habit was general among all courtesans, the humblest as well as the proudest. "Who keeps you from choosing a sister?" says one of Petronius' heroines; and it is one man who says to another. "I give you my *brother*." Sometimes, in designating a mistress whom one had had, one referred to her as his *sister of the left hand* (*laeva soror*, says Plautus),\*\* and a courtesan gave the waggish name of *little brother* to whomsoever had had dealings with her.

We should not be too much astonished at this decency and even prudery of spoken language, as contrasted with the constant immodesty of gestures and the audacity of deeds. Hence, this expression, which occurs at every possible excuse in the common speech, in the form of a proverb: *Respect the ears* (*parcite auribus*). As to the eyes, they were spared nothing, and scandalized by nothing that they saw. They felt no repugnance at pausing over the pages of one of those obscene books, those erotic or Sotadic\*\*\* writings, in verse or in prose, which the libertines of Rome loved to read during the night (*pagina nocturna*, is Martial's phrase). This was a species of literature highly cultivated among the Romans, although little to the taste of decent folk. The creators of this literature, dear to courtesans, appear to have been animated by the desire of winning for themselves, through their works, a name at the feasts of debauchery, and by way of honoring the immodest gods to whose service they had devoted them-

\**Translator's Note*:—The tense of the original is, of course, future.

\*\**Translator's Note*:—Cf. The French *mariage de la main gauche*, *reines de la main gauche*, etc.

\*\*\**Translator's Note*:—From Sotades of Maronea (about 280 B. C.), noted for his licentiousness.

selves. But it was not only professional libertines who composed these lubricious books (*molles libri*); at times the poets, the most esteemed writers, permitted themselves to be drawn into this profligacy of the imagination and abuse of talent; it was usually on their part a sort of offering made to Venus; it was, in certain cases, a mere literary sport, a concession to the tastes of the day. "Pliny, who is generally esteemed," says Ausonius (in the *Cento Nuptialis*), "has composed certain lascivious poems, although his manners have never been the object of censorship. The *Miscellany* of Sulpitia breathes a voluptuous pleasure, and yet this worthy matron did not often take herself too lightly. Apuleius, whose life was that of a sage, appears all too amorous in his epigrams; severity reigns in all his precepts; license reigns in his letters to Coerellia. The *Symposium* of Plato contains poems which one would say had been composed in houses of ill fame. What shall I say of the *Erotopaegnon* of the old poet, Laevius, of the satiric verses (*fescenninos*) of Ennius. Must one cite Evenus, whom Menander has nicknamed *the Wise*? Must one cite Menander himself and all the comic authors? Their manner of life is austere; their works are waggish. And Virgil, who was called Parthian on account of his chastity, has he not described, in the eighth book of his *Aeneid*, the loves of Venus and Vulcan with an indecent modesty? Has he not, in the third book of his *Georgics*, pictured for us, as indecently as could be, the unions of men changed into beasts? Pliny, in order to excuse himself for a mental debauch for which he does not appear to feel much self-reproach, observes: "My book is obscene, my life is pure (*lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba*)."

The private libraries of the courtezans and their friends must have been extensive, but the names of the principal authors have barely come down to us. Among the Romans, as among the Greeks, it was the erotics who had to suffer most from the proscription of Christian morality. Poetry in vain sought grace; vainly these works looked for a refuge in the enlightened and liberal protection of the learned connoisseurs of antiquity; vainly they were handed down from mouth to mouth, in the memory of voluptuaries and gallant ladies; Chistianity mercilessly tracked them down and all but obliterated them for tradition. They all disappeared and were effaced, with the exception of those who, like Martial and Catullus, had the happy privilege of being protected by their poetic reputation.

Religious scruple even went so far as to tear out many of the pages in the works of the best writers. Latin letters thus lost the majority of the poets of pagan love, and this systematic destruction was the work of the Fathers of the Church. We no longer possess anything of Proculus who, according to Ovid, had followed in the footsteps of Callimachus; nothing of the orators, Hortensius and Servius Sulpitius, who composed such beautiful and licentious verses; nothing of Sisenna, who had translated from the Greek the Milesian books (*Milesii libri*) of Aristides; nothing of Memonius or of Ticida, who, on the say-so of Ovid, were not more concerned with modesty in words than they were with reserve in actions; nothing of Sabellus, who had chanted the arcana of pleasure in the manner of the Greek poetess Elephantis; nothing of Cornificius, nor of Eubius, nor of the impudent Anser, nor of Porcius, nor of Aedituus, nor of all the erotics who were the delight of courtezans and of the "good women" of Rome. The new Christians did not forgive much to the Greeks, whom they understood still less, nor to the ignoble Sotades, who lent his name to poems inspired by a love contrary to nature; nor to Mimnermus of Smyrna, whose verses, Propertius tells us, were better love poems than those of Homer; nor to the impure Hemiteon of Sybaris, who had summed up the experience of his debauched friends in a poem entitled *Sybaritis*; nor to the brazen Nico, who had put into verse the acts of courtezans; nor to the celebrated Musaeus, whose lyre, the equal of that of Orpheus, had evoked all the venereal passions. Thus was annihilated, almost completely, the Pantheon of Greek and Roman prostitution, after two or three centuries of persevering censure and of implacable proscription. The courtezans and the libertines were less zealous than scholars in defending their favorite authors, for libertines and courtezans, becoming old, became at the same time devout and burned their books. It was scholars who preserved for us Horace, Catullus, Martial and Petronius.



## CHAPTER XX

THIS frightful mire of prostitution in which Roman society wallowed could not fail to have its deleterious effect upon the public health. Although poets, historians and even the physicians of antiquity are silent on this subject, which they fear to present under a dishonorable light, although the evil consequences of what a writer of the thirteenth century calls impure love (*impura venus*) have left as few traces in the satiric texts as they have in *materia medica*, it is impossible not to recognize the fact that the depravation of manners among the Romans had multiplied the germs and increased the ravages of the maladies of Venus. These maladies were certainly very numerous, always very tenacious and frequently terrible, some of them. But they have been almost wholly neglected or at least glossed over by the Greek and Roman physicians and naturalists. We can merely hazard a few philosophic conjectures as to the causes of this oblivion and general silence. In the absence of any clear and formal indication in this respect, we are reduced to supposing that religious motives forbade the inclusion among ostensible maladies of those diseases which affected the organs of generation and which had their origin in debauchery. The ancients did not wish to insult the gods, who had accorded to men the benefits of love, by accusing those same gods of having created an enduring poison with this eternal ambrosia. The ancients did not care to have Aesculapius, the inventor and the god of medicine, enter into an overt contest with Venus by endeavoring to provide a remedy for the vengeance and chastisements of the goddess. In a word, the maladies of the sexual organs, little known and little studied in Greece as at Rome, were hidden away and disguised, as though they branded with infamy those who were tainted with them, while these latter secretly strove, with the aid of magicians and vendors of philtres, to cure themselves.

Venereal maladies were, undoubtedly, less frequent and less complicated among the Greeks than among the Romans, for the reason that prostitution was far from committing the same ravages at Athens that it did at Rome. There was not in Greece, as in the capital of the Roman world, a frightful promiscuity of all sexes,

ages and nations. Greek libertinism, which took a certain prestige from the sentiment of ideal love, had not opened its arms, as Roman libertinism had, to all the foreign debaucheries; the former had preserved always, even in its greatest excesses, certain instincts of delicacy, whereas the second had abandoned itself to the grossest appetites and had pushed physical brutality to its extreme limits. We cannot doubt that grave accidents in the way of secret contagion had accompanied the invasion of Rome by Asiatic lust. It was about the year of Rome 568, or 187 years before Christ, that this Asiatic lust, as Saint Augustine calls it in his *City of God*, was imported into Italy by the proconsul Cneius Manlius, who had subjugated Greece and conquered Antiochus the Great, King of Syria. Cneius Manlius, jealously eager to attain triumphal honors which had not yet been decreed him, had brought with him dancers, flute-players, courtezans, eunuchs, effeminate and all the shameful accessories to a debauchery which till then had been unknown in the Roman republic. The first fruits of this debauchery were, naturally, nameless maladies which attacked the organs of generation and which spread among the people, becoming more aggravated as they became complicated with each other. "Then," says Saint Augustine, "then alone did beds ornamented with gold and precious tapestries appear: then were musicians introduced at the feasts, and, along with them, many licentious perversities (*tunc, inductae in convivia psalteriae et aliae licentiosae nequitiae*)." These musicians came from Tyre, from Babylon and the cities of Syria, where, from time immemorial, the sources of life had been polluted by horrible maladies, born of impudicity. The books of Moses bear witness to the existence of these maladies among the Jews, who had contracted them in Egypt, and who had found them even more redoubtable among the populations of the Promised Land. The Hebrews destroyed, almost completely, these Ammonite, Midianite, and Canaanite populations; but the latter, in disappearing, had left the Hebrews, as though by way of revenge, a hoard of impurities, which had its effect, at once, upon their manners and upon their blood stream. There was soon not a race in the world more vicious or more unhealthy than the Jewish race. The neighboring peoples of Judea, those ancient devotees of Sacred prostitution, put, at least, more refinement and delicacy into their lustful outbreaks and, as a consequence, each better preserved its bodily health. All of Syria,

nevertheless, it must be admitted, was but a permanent home of pestilence, leprosy, and the venereal evil (*lues venerea*). It was to this dangerous place that Rome went to seek new pleasures and new maladies. We have already sustained this thesis, which is by no means a paradox, and which science at need could support with substantial proofs, that vice against nature, which Moses, alone among the legislators before Christ, had branded with reprobation, did not exist and could not have existed in a state of tolerance throughout all antiquity except as a result of frequent and continual perils which interfered with natural pleasures. Women were often unhealthy, and to approach them under certain circumstances, under varying conditions of temperament, season, locality and mode of life, brought consequences serious to the health of husbands or lovers. Women who were the healthiest and purest ceased to be so suddenly for inexplicable reasons, reasons which appeared to elude the precautions of hygiene as it did the remedies of medicine. The heat of the climate, physical uncleanness, the menstrual indispositions of the feminine sex, the degenerative manifestations of that common indisposition, the *fleurs blanches*, a succession of child beds and other accidental reasons induced local maladies which varied in symptoms and in character according to the age, constitution, temperament and habits of life of the subject. These foreign maladies, the origin of which remains practically unknown, a radical cure for which was a tedious affair, very difficult and even impossible in some cases, tended to surround with a sort of mistrust the most legitimate relations between the two sexes. Any inflammation, any infirmity, any weakening of the generative forces, was looked upon as an almost indelible stain. Evil fates, evil spirits and evil influences were blamed for those poisonous germs which lay hidden in the tenderest caresses of a loved woman, and these caresses, so desirable before one knew how perfidious and hostile they were, soon came to be feared in themselves. And so it was, fear and sometimes disgust drove away from relations with women men whom experience had enlightened as to the morbid phenomena attendant upon such relations; and in this manner, a disordered imagination had endeavored to alter the sexual laws of humanity and to deprive women of the privileges of their sex, by transferring these privileges to debased and bastard beings, who consented to be of no sex by becoming the docile instruments of a hideous debauchery. It is

true that other maladies of a more repugnant and not less contagious nature had taken root among the population, along with the depraved tastes which had given rise to them and which subjected them to incessant transformations; but these maladies were less widespread than those of women, and undoubtedly, one might better guard against them. It is to be understood, also, that in all these mysterious maladies, leprosy, which was endemic throughout the Orient, took a part, appearing under the most capricious and unaccountable forms.

The physicians of antiquity, we have every reason to believe, refused to treat the evils of one and the other Venus (*utraque Venus*), for the reason that these evils possessed in their eyes, as in those of the populace, an air of divine malediction, seeming to be the retribution of infamy. The wretches who were tainted with them had recourse, then, in order to get rid of them, to religious practices, to the recipes of a vulgar empiricism, to shady works of magic. It was this, above all, which gave potency to the occult sciences and the art of philtres; this was, for the priests as well as for the magicians, a road to riches and reputation. This venereal contagion, which resulted inevitably from unclean relations, was always looked upon as a celestial chastisement or as an infernal vengeance; the victim of the contagion, far from complaining and accusing the author of her misfortune, accused herself and sought in herself alone the reasons for this sad experience. Hence, the many offerings, hence the sacrifices in the temples; hence, many magical invocations in the depths of the woods; hence, the officious intervention of old women, of enchanters and all the subordinate charlatans who lived at the expense of Prostitution. It is impossible to understand, otherwise, the silence of the Greek and Roman writers on the subject of the shameful maladies, which were formerly more frequent and more hideous than they are today. These maladies the physicians properly so called would not treat, except secretly, and those who were infected with them, men and women, never pleaded guilty to them, even when they came to die of them. Leprosy, moreover, that almost incurable affection, which transformed itself into an infinite number of forms, and which, in its various stages, exhibited the most diverse symptoms—leprosy served as a single explanation of all the venereal diseases; it was leprosy, also, which engendered, modified, augmented and denatured the other maladies and gave them essentially



the appearance of a cutaneous affection. It is obvious enough that leprosy and the venereal diseases, by being combined and confused, and by reciprocally stimulating each other, had ended by leaving an hereditary virus in the whole body of a nation. Thus, the great leprosy belongs traditionally to the Jewish people, the little leprosy, or the *mal de Venus* (*lues venerea*) to the Syrian people.

When this disease came to Rome, with the Syrians whom Cneius Manlius had transplanted there as though to found in his own country a school of pleasure, Rome, already the victorious mistress of a good part of the world, Rome had no doctors. Doctors had not been tolerated in the interior of the city except under exceptional circumstances, in times of pestilence and epidemic. But once the public health was out of danger, the Greek physicians who had been called in were dismissed with that disdain which the people of Romulus, in the period of their gross and savage independence, had evidenced for the arts which flourished in time of peace. The Romans, it is true, had led, up to that time, a rude, laborious, austere and frugal life; they were unacquainted with any other disease than death, as one old poet tells us, and by reason of their robust constitutions, early inured to fatigues and privations, did not fear any infirmities except those which were occasioned by wounds received in war. All the medicine of which they had need lay in a familiarity with certain vulnerary plants and in the practice of certain surgical operations. Their sobriety and their continence protected them against those maladies which are the result of excess at table and of debauchery. Those whom an odious vice, familiar to the Fauns and to the aborigines, their ancestors, had defiled with some hideous infection were careful not to spread this infection and died of it rather than seek a remedy and reveal their turpitude. Moreover, in an age of innocence, or rather of modesty, all the diseases which attached to the shameful parts, whatever their causes might be, were confounded under a single term, which bore witness to the horror they inspired: *morbus indecens*. Thought and imagination avoided pausing over the distinctive features of the various affections which were designated in this manner. It is possible, nevertheless, to indicate, if not satisfactorily to describe, those diseases which were the most in evidence. There was the *marisca*, a cancerous tumor, the size of a large fig, of which it bore the name, obstructing the womb or sometimes even bursting outside and propagating itself

about the anus. When this tumor was not so large, it was called the *ficus* or ordinary fig; when it was composed of a number of small purulent excrescences, it was called *chia*, which was also the Greek name of the little wild-fig. Among women, this disease frequently took the form of a more or less bitter excretion, sometimes bloody, always fetid, the generic name of which was *fluor* (a flux). But the *morbus indecens* varied little, and after it had attained a victim, or rather a guilty party, of one or the other sex, it did not seek to graft itself elsewhere; the disease, left to itself, made incurable ravages and secretly devoured the victim, whose wretched life was only prolonged by baths and massages. It sometimes happened that, in the case of an energetic constitution, the affection appeared to yield to treatment and to disappear for a time; but it would come back afterward more tenaciously than ever and under still more malignant forms. There was nothing, moreover, but empirical magic which dared to combat the sad effects of the *morbus indecens*. The only doctors who were then at Rome were miserable slaves, Jews or Greeks, whose whole pharmacopoeia consisted of philtres, talismans and religious practices; this variety of medicine appeared to have been invented expressly for these maladies, which the victims readily attributed, in order to escape the shame of confessing the cause, to fate, to the malign influence of the stars and of demons, to the vengeance of the gods and to the will of destiny.

We must not fail to remark that Greek medicine was introduced at Rome at almost the same time as Asiatic lust; this latter dates from the year of Rome 588; the former from the year 600 or thereabouts. Seventy years before, about 535, a few Greek physicians had endeavored to settle in the city, called there by different maladies which Roman austerity was unfitted to cope with. (We may presume that the *morbus indecens* was one of these chronic and inveterate maladies.) But they met with so many insults, so many difficulties and so much manifest repugnance that they abandoned this first attempt to settle there; they did not return until Rome was a little less proud of the health of its inhabitants. Good cheer and debauchery had, in the space of a few years, created, developed and multiplied a great number of maladies which had not been known since the foundation of the city. Among these maladies, the most common and the most varied were certainly those which debauchery had produced. They might always be traced back to certain con-

fessed causes; or rather one avoided declaring the causes, while the physician was careful to cover them with a decent cloak, classifying them with the respectable diseases. This is why these shameful maladies, in the medical works of antiquity, are not to be met with at all, or else are disguised under names which hide their infamy. It is under the head of leprosy that we must seek for almost all the varieties of venereal diseases, afflictions which were not lacking in ancient any more than in modern times. The majority of the physicians were slaves or freed-men: "I am sending you a physician chosen from among my slaves," one reads in Suetonius (*Mitto tibi praeterea cum eo ex servis meis medicum*), and this passage, although variously interpreted by commentators, proves that the physician was often no more than a mere slave in the house of a rich patrician. Each one, therefore, might have his own doctor by buying him, undoubtedly at a very dear price; for the venal value of a slave depended upon the merit he possessed, and a clever physician, who might be, at the same time, an adroit surgeon and a learned apothecary, was paid for not less dearly than a musician or a Greek philosopher. It is to be understood that the physician, having no other task than healing his master and the people of his house, practiced his art in a servile fashion and, from fear of the rod or ruder chastisements, surrounded with a prudent discretion the domestic maladies, which it was his duty to cure under pain of the cruellest punishment. The freed-men physicians were not in a very free position regarding their patients; they did not fear being beaten or thrown into irons, in case their treatment met with little success, but they might be brought to justice and made to pay a considerable fine, if success had not crowned their efforts, and if their art had been compelled to confess its impotency. It is evident that, in this delicate situation, the physician only treated diseases which he was practically certain of curing. This state of things indicates, clearly enough, that, in order to be sure of medical attention in the case of illness, it was necessary to have at least one physician among the slaves who constituted the personnel of the house, and this physician, who held the secrets of his master's health, was especially necessary to the latter when Venus or Priapus had suddenly become unfavorable or hostile.

This fact alone is, in our opinion, a sufficient explanation of the mystery which shrouded venereal disease in antiquity, a mystery equally enforced by religion and by public decency. The Romans

erected a temple to the Fever, a temple to the Cough; but they would have been afraid of bringing shame upon Venus, their divine ancestor, by setting up a cult to the maladies which dishonored their goddess. It is possible that they denied these maladies as an insult to humanity, and they did not even wish the *morbus indecens* to have a name in the annals of medicine and of the Roman republic. The existence of this evil, of the true syphilis, or at least of an analogous affection, is, however, only too well established in the medical *Treatise* of Celsus, who, nevertheless, did not dare to attribute it to an impure relation, and who avoided tracing it to its suspected origin. Celsus, the pupil or rather the contemporary of Asclepiades of Bithynia, the first celebrated physician who came from Greece to Rome, leaves us in no doubt as to the very characteristic presence of the venereal evil among the Romans, for he describes in his book, that admirable resumé of the medical knowledge of Augustus' century, a number of affections of the sexual parts, affections evidently venereal, which modern science has long since definitely associated with identical manifestations of the syphilis in the fifteenth century. These affections are depicted with too much of verisimilitude in the Latin work to permit us to entertain any doubt as to their contagious nature and their venereal transmission. We are dealing here with the *morbus indecens*, the *lues venera*, although Celsus does not employ these generic names, but rather, distinctive ones which he himself appears to have created for these varieties of the obscene malady. The reflections with which Celsus preludes the long paragraph which he devotes to the maladies of the shameful parts, in the sixth book of his treatise on medicine, these reflections tend to confirm our feeling with regard to the motives of reserve and convenience which opposed the public treatment of such maladies at Rome. "The Greeks," says Celsus, "in treating a subject like this, employ more appropriate terms, and ones which, moreover, are accepted by usage, in as much as they recur incessantly in the writings and the ordinary language of physicians. The Latin words are more offensive (*apud nos foediora verba*) and it cannot even be said in their favor that they are in common use in the mouths of decent persons. It is, then, a difficult undertaking to endeavor to respect propriety while following the precepts of the art. This consideration, however, has not restrained my pen, for the reason that, in the first place, I do not wish to leave unrecorded the useful instruc-



tions which I have received, and because it is of importance to spread in the Vulgate the medical notions relative to the treatment of these maladies, which the victims never reveal to others of their own free will (*Dein, quia in vulgus eorum curatio etiam praeique cognoscenda, quae invitissimus quisque alteri ostendit.*)” Celsus thus excuses himself for publishing a form of treatment which had been looked upon as secret, and he appears to be animated by a desire to make it available to everyone (*in vulgus*) by way of obviating the terrible consequences which result from an ignorance of medicine and self-neglect on the part of the patient.

He passes in review those maladies which one might find with all their special symptoms in the monographs on syphilis. He speaks, first of all, of an inflammation of the *membrum virile* (*inflammatio colis*), which produces such a swelling that the prepuce can no longer be drawn back; he prescribes abundant fomentations of hot water in order to detach the prepuce and soothing injections into the canal of the urethra; he recommends fastening the *membrum virile* to the abdomen in order to obviate the suffering caused by the tension of the prepuce, which sometimes, upon being drawn back, reveals dry or humid ulcers. “Ulcers of this sort,” he says, “call for frequent applications of hot water; they should also be covered and kept from the effects of cold. The *membrum virile*, in certain cases, is so eaten away under the skin that glandular trouble results. It becomes necessary then to cut away the prepuce at the same time.” He indicates as a means of curing the ulcers a preparation composed of pepper, saffron, myrrh, burned leather, and vitriolic minerals ground up together in an astringent wine. Have we not here a syphilitic gonorrhoea, accompanied by chancres and ulcerations? Celsus goes on to mention tubercles (*tubercula*), which the Greeks called *phymeta*, fungus excrescences which form about the gland and which it is necessary to cauterize with a red iron or caustics, powdering with leather filings in order to prevent the return of this parasitic vegetation. Celsus, after having clearly described these phenomena of venereal virus, pauses over certain exceptional cases, in which ulcers, the result of a vitiated blood stream, if not of a particular disposition on the part of the patient, produce a gangrene which attacks even the body of the *membrum virile*. It is necessary to practice incisions, to cut into the quick, remove the gangrened flesh and cauterize with powdered caustics, notably with a compound of

chalk, chalcite and pimento. The patient who has undergone this frequently dangerous operation must have absolute rest until the scabs left by the cauterization shall have fallen away of themselves. Hemorrhage is to be feared, when it has been necessary to remove a part of the *membrum virile*. Celsus goes on to note a chancre (*cancrigenus*), which the Greeks called *phageclaina*, a very malignant chancre, the treatment of which admits of no delay, and which must be burned with a red iron upon its first appearance; otherwise this phagedena eats away the *membrum virile*, deforms the gland, invades the canal and penetrates even into the bladder; it is accompanied, in this case, by a latent and painless gangrene, which brings on death in spite of all the resources of the physician's art. Is it possible to assume that this species of chancre was not the local manifestation of syphilis of the most malign sort? Celsus merely cites, in passing, a sort of calloused tumor, insensible to the touch, which spreads over the whole of the *membrum virile*, and which demands to be excised with precaution. As to the carbuncle (*carbunculus*), which makes its appearance in the same place, it has need of being deterged by injections before being cauterized. Recourse may be had, after the excrescences have fallen away, to those liquid medications which are prepared for ulcers of the mouth.

In slow or spontaneous inflammations of the testicle, which are not the result of a blow (*sine ictu orta*), and which come, consequently, as the result of a venereal accident, Celsus advises bleeding of the foot, diet and the application of local emollients. He gives the recipe for a number of these emollients, to be used in case the testicle has become hard and has entered upon a state of chronic induration. Celsus takes great care to distinguish the swelling of the testicle produced from an internal cause from that which results from exterior violence, from compression or a blow. He approaches only with repugnance the maladies of the anus, which are, he says, very numerous and very importunate (*multa taediique plena mala*)! He distinguishes but three: the chaps, or *rhagades*, condyloma\* and hemorrhoids, which may frequently be of venereal origin. The fissures of the anus, which the Greeks call *rhagadia*, the shameful origin of which Celsus does not explain, were treated with plasters, into the preparation of which entered lead, a preparation of silver and turpentine. Sometimes the chaps or fissures extended all the way to the

\*Translator's Note:—Anal swelling.

intestine, and they were then filled with lint and soaked in the same antisyphilitic solution. Affections of this sort called for a gentle, simple and gelatinous alimentation, with complete repose and the frequent employment of lukewarm hip-baths. As to the *condyloma*, this excrescence came, ordinarily, from certain inflammations of the anus (*tuberculum, quod ex quadam inflammatione nasci solet*), and it was necessary to treat it from the beginning in the same manner as the *rhagades*; after hip-baths and solvent plasters, recourse was had, in certain cases, to cauterization and to more energetic caustics; antimony, ceruse, alum and litharge were the ordinary ingredients of local emollients destined to destroy the condyloma, following the disappearance of which it was advisable to prolong the mild and soothing régime. Celsus, in advising similar remedies against ulcerous and tuberculous hemorrhoids, lets it be understood that he frequently attributed these affections to a similar cause. He only speaks with much reserve of an accident which debauchery rendered all the more frequent and dangerous, the falling of the womb and of the matrix (*si anus ipse vel os vulvae procidit*). He also avoids concerning himself with the shameful maladies which are likewise met with in women, and, in closing, barely indicates, in summary fashion, an ulcer resembling a mushroom (*fungo quoque simile*), which affects the anus and the matrix. He recommends fomenting this ulcer with tepid water in winter and with cold water in summer, powdering it with leather-filings, with wax and with chalk, and then employing cauterization, if the disease persists in spite of this first treatment. But it is evident Celsus does not dare, out of deference to the feminine sex, to assume that they are equally concerned with these shameful maladies; he seems to feel that it would be an insult to depict them as exposed to inflammations, ulcers, tubercles and all the hideous ravages of the venereal evil.

And yet, the learned author of the *Manual of Venereal Diseases* may be heard denying what is to be found in the work of Celsus and evidencing a blind obstinacy when he declares that: "In the whole of Celsus we do not find anything which leads us to suspect the existence of the syphilitic virus, but merely of local maladies, most often due to local and nonvirulent causes." He adds, after having summed up the Celsus' treatment for diseases of the genital parts: "It is, then, natural to conclude, with Astruc and Lamettrie, that all these supposedly venereal diseases which we find mentioned in

the ancients were nonsyphilitic maladies." Our own conclusion is, precisely, to the contrary; and after having compared the descriptions of the Roman physicians with those which modern science affords us, after having taken account of the objects of each of the forms of treatment prescribed by ancient and modern medicine, we shall have no further doubt as to the origin and nature of the disease in question here. Syphilis, the true syphilis, engendered by leprosy and debauchery, existed at Rome, as well as in the majority of countries where manners had been corrupted by the admixture of foreign populations. The last translator of Celsus, more enlightened or at least more impartial than his predecessors, informs us that the learned M. Littré has discovered certain manuscripts of the thirteenth century "in which all the affections of the genital parts noted by the ancients, and even those accidents which we regard as secondary, are formally assigned to impure coitus; and this, two centuries before the period commonly assigned to the invasion of the venereal malady."

This malady had made its appearance at Rome, under the redoubtable name of *elephantiasis*, about the year of Rome 650 (105 years before our era), and the elephantiasis, which soon infected Italy, gave strange forms to all the maladies with which it became complicated. Asclepiades of Bithynia owes his celebrity, in part, to this terrible affliction, which he named the Protean evil, and which he excelled in curing, having observed it for long in Asia Minor. According to Pliny's statement, the Romans looked upon themselves as blessed by possessing in him a beneficent genius sent by the gods. Asclepiades, who had applied to medicine the philosophic system of Epicurus, saw in all diseases a failure of harmony between the atoms of which the human body appeared to him to be composed. He was the first to divide diseases into acute and chronic affections; he was the first to seek the causes of inflammation in a swelling of some sort; it is obvious that he had made a special study of the venereal diseases. A great advocate of dietetics, he frequently prescribed massages and hydro-therapeutic fomentations; he had thought of douches (*balneae pensiles*) and, following the example of his master Epicurus, he was not an enemy of sensual pleasures, provided they were taken in moderation. This Greek physician must have found success among the Romans, since he did not interfere too much with their native inclinations, permitting to his patients



a wise use of their physical faculties; this, he would say, was to keep their souls from going to sleep, since he believed that the soul resided in the organs of the five senses. Like Asclepiades, the latter's favored disciple, T. Aufidius, recommended the use of massage in all maladies, treated successfully the leprosy and all the venereal complaints and included among his remedies flagellation and the pleasures of love, which he looked upon as a sovereign cure for melancholy.

Leprosy had become at Rome, as among the Jews, a chronic, permanent, hereditary malady; it encountered a fresh impetus and prodigious aids in the abuse of amorous pleasures; it was transformed and reproduced itself incessantly under the most grievous forms; it was accompanied by a frightful train of ulcers and cancerous protuberances; it only disappeared under the energetic action of medical remedies and surgical operations to reappear soon with more sinister symptoms and a deadlier grip than ever. Musa, the physician to Augustus, whom he cured of a disease which historians have neither named nor described, an inflammatory and local malady, aggravated by warm baths—Musa appears to have devoted himself particularly to the study and treatment of the leprosy, scrofulous and venereal infections. He had been a slave before being freed by Augustus, and he must have been familiar with the secret maladies which were commonly to be treated in families, grave and tenacious ones which attacked all parts of the organism after having sprung from an impure coitus. Musa invented a number of remedies for ulcers of a malignant character; and these preparations, which preserved his name, after falling into empirical hands, were looked upon as infallible in the majority of venereal cases which Celsus has described. Musa did not limit himself to external applications; he subjected the patient to an internal depurative treatment, ordering him to drink essences of lettuce and chicory. This treatment, which was not in use before his time, shows us clearly enough that he looked upon the venereal evil as a virus which mingled with the blood stream and the humors, inflaming and corrupting them. He treated by the same system all the diseases which he believed were derived, directly or indirectly, from this virus; ulcerations of the mouth, running of the ears, affections of the eyes; infirmities so common at Rome that they had become endemic there under the Emperors. Meges of Sidon, who practiced at the same time as Musa, also won distinction in treating the leprosy maladies which might often be

venereal in nature. Meges was a pupil of Themison, who founded the Methodic School, and who, with the object of discovering a cure for leprosy, had first investigated the causes, studied the symptoms and defined the principle.

This principle was, or had been, venereal in its origin. Leprosy, from whatever country it came, from Egypt or Judea, from Syria or Phoenicia, was, first of all, a local affection, the result of impure relations, developed and aggravated by the lack of medical care, favored by accidental circumstances and transformed unceasingly, gradually or spontaneously, according to the age, temperament, habits of life and physical constitution of the patient. Hence those varieties of leprosy which the Greek and Roman physicians seem to have avoided describing in their works, as though theory on the subject of this shameful malady inspired them with repugnance. The first form of leprosy was therefore, in all probability, the true syphilis of the fifteenth century, and it is in elephantiasis that, in our opinion, we are able to recognize, at once, syphilis and this primary form of leprosy. Celsus barely speaks of elephantiasis "almost unknown in Italy," he says, "but very widespread in certain countries." He undoubtedly had not observed it, or at least did not care to devote much attention to a repulsive malady, which he looked upon as a rare exception. "This disease," he limits himself to saying, "affects the entire constitution until the very bones are altered. The surface of the body is covered with spots and numerous tumors, the red color of which assumes by degrees a blackish tint; the skin becomes uneven, thick or thin, hard or soft, and, as it were, squamous; there is an emaciation of the body and a swelling of the face, legs and feet. When the malady has lasted for some time (*ubi vetus morbus est*), the fingers and toes disappear, in a manner, under the effects of this swelling; then a slight fever makes its appearance, which is enough to carry off the patient, already burdened with so many woes." This description is colorless enough, incomplete enough, compared with one left us by a contemporary of Celsus, an illustrious Greek physician, Areteus, of Cappadocia, who had probably studied the malady in Asia Minor, where it was so frequent and so terrible.

Following is a frightful description, which we have reduced by two-thirds, suppressing many of the poetical and metaphorical features which add nothing to the truth and horror of the picture.

We shall remark that, in our opinion, the author confuses with elephantiasis a number of maladies, such as *satyriasis* and *mentagra*, which, according to him, were but symptoms or special forms of elephantiasis. "There are," says Areteus, "a number of similarities between the elephant-disease and the elephant itself, in the matter of appearance, color, and length-of-life; but they are each unique in kind: the animal resembles no other animal, the disease no other disease. This malady has also been called: *the lion*, for the reason that it wrinkles the face of the patient like that of a lion; *satyriasis*, on account of the red color which breaks out on the cheeks and cheekbones of the patient, and, at the same time, because of the impudently amorous desires which torment the one who suffers with it; finally, *the disease of Hercules*, for the reason that there is none greater or stronger. This disease is, as a matter of fact, the most energetic of all in undermining the vigor of man and the most potent in producing his death; it is equally hideous to view, redoubtable as the animal the name of which it bears and invincible as death itself; for it comes from the same cause as death: the cooling of the natural warmth of the body. And yet, it forms without apparent signs; no alteration, no disfigurement attack the organism at first, show themselves upon the body, or reveal the existence of a nascent disease; but this hidden fire, after having for a long time remained buried in the viscera, as in the shades of Tartarus, finally bursts forth and spreads itself over the outside only after it has invaded all the interior parts of the body.

"This deleterious fire begins, in the majority of patients, on the face, which becomes as shiny as a mirror; with others it begins with the elbows, the knees or the joints of the hands and feet. From then on, these poor wretches are destined to perish, since the physician, from negligence or from ignorance, has not endeavored to combat the disease when it was still weak and half-hidden. The disease increases; the breath of the patient is infected; the urine is thick, whitish and clouded like that of mares; the food is not digested and the chyle, formed by the bad action of these organs, is less adapted to nourishing the patient than to nourishing the malady itself, the seat of which is in the lower belly. Tuberosities begin to bud out, one after another; they are thick and knotty; the space between these unequal tumors is chapped, like the leather hide of an elephant; the veins are enlarged, not from a superabundance of blood, but

from the thickness of the skin. The malady is not slow in manifesting itself otherwise; similar tuberosities appear over all the body; already the hair has begun to die and fall off; the head is bare, and what little hair remains turns white; the neck and the pubic regions are soon completely depilated; the skin of the head is then cut with deep slits or clefts, numerous and rigid. The face bristles with hard or pointed warts, sometimes white at the summit, green at the base; the tongue is covered with tubercles in the form of barley grains. When the malady manifests itself by a violent irruption, blotches invade the fingers, the knees and the neck. The cheekbones puff out and grow red; the eyes are cloudy and copper colored; the yellow eyebrows come together and contract, being laden with large black or livid warts, in such a manner that the eyes appear to be veiled under deep curtains, which fold above the eyelids. This folding of the eyebrows, this deformity, gives the human face the character of the lion and the elephant. The cheeks and the nose also exhibit blackish excrescences; the lips are swollen, the lower lip being pendant and slobbering; the teeth are already blackened; the eyes are elongated, flabby and flaccid like those of an elephant; ulcers break out around them and exude a purulent secretion. The whole superficies of the body is furrowed with calloused wrinkles and even with black fissures, which desiccate it like leather: hence the name of the malady. Crevices also divide the heels and the soles of the feet to the middle of the toes. If the malady spreads, the tuberosities of the cheeks, neck, fingers and knees end in fetid and incurable ulcers; they rise one above another so that the latest ones appear to dominate and feed on the first. It even happens that the members die before the patient does, even to the point of dropping away from the body, which loses, thus, in succession, its nose, fingers, feet and entire hands, as well as the genital parts; for the disease does not kill the patient, thereby delivering him from a life of cruel and horrible torments, until after it has dismembered him."

When one compares this frightful picture with that which the physicians of the fifteenth century give us concerning the appearance of syphilis in Europe, one cannot doubt that this same syphilis was known fifteen centuries before under the name of elephantiasis; one can doubt no less that leprosy, of whatever sort, had its source in an unclean cohabitation. Such appears to have been the opinion of Raymond, the learned historian of Elephantiasis: "The economic



laws established in the Orient," he says, "on the subject of gonorrhoeas, which were very common, and on the subject of intercourse with women prove that the maladies of the genital organs and the groins, which have so close a correspondence with each other, were really venereal." It is to the leprosy, it is to the syphilitic malady, that one must attribute the hatred and contempt which the Jews who were afflicted with it inspired everywhere, especially among the Romans. Leprosy and the venereal evil were, in reality, one, after they had been combined; nothing was more frequent, but nothing also appeared more dishonorable, and no one was willing to confess himself a victim, even when everyone else was or had been. The attitude of physicians toward these mysterious ailments, which seemed to have been repugnant to them, must always have been a delicate and difficult one. They treated nothing else but the leprosy; they were incessantly inventing unguents, panaceas and antidotes against it, and lepers never showed themselves, at least until the disease had broken out on their faces and hands. We see Celsus pretending to cure these ulcers of the fingers with lotions of boiled oil. To such a source we may assign those fleshy excrescences called in Greek *pterugia*, which grew at the base of the nails, and which did not always yield to the employment of mineral caustics; hence that *oscedo* or pernicious abscess of the mouth, which Marcellus Empyricus, in the fourth century, naïvely described, without seeking its source, attributing to it, however, a syphilitic character; hence another malady of the mouth, still more characteristic and widespread among the lower class of people, that class from which were recruited the vagrant prostitutes and those vile ones who indulged in the form of debauchery known as *fellatio*. This repellent malady was called *campanus morbus*, for the reason that Capua, that home of lust and infamy, as Cicero calls her, (*domicilium superbiae, luxuriae et infamiae*) was accused of having spawned it. It is certain that the majority of the inhabitants of Capua bore upon their face the marks of this shameful disease. Horace, in the story of his voyage to Brundisium, introduces Sarmentus, a freed-man of Octavius and one of the latter's effeminates; he represents him as laughing and joking over the *campanus morbus*, and over his own face, which the disease had disfigured (*campanum in morbum, in faciem per multa jocatus*). Sarmentus had, on his left cheek, a horrible scar, grimacingly evident under the hair of his beard (*at illi foeda cicatrix*

*setosam laevi frontem turpaverat oris*). One of the commentators of Horace, Cruquius, also has a commentary on the Campanian evil, and he pictures it as a livid excrescence which bristles the lips and ends by obstructing the orifice of the mouth. Plautus leaves us in no doubt as to the nature of this excrescence when, in his *Trinummus*, he proclaims the infamy of the Campanian race, which, he says, surpasses in long-suffering the Syrians themselves (*Campos genus multo Syrorum jam antidit patientia*). Plautus had become familiar with many odious and immodest mysteries in turning the mill-wheel in an Umbrian bake-shop.

In the case of the majority of the maladies of Venus, those tumors and excrescences which physicians looked upon as the disease itself, in place of seeing in them merely local effects of a more deeply-seated affection, ordinarily passed over into the chronic state, except in those sufficiently rare cases in which massage, vapor baths and refreshing beverages were able to weaken the venereal virus and gradually to destroy it. One never came out of a long and painful course of treatment without bearing with him the marks of the disease, not merely on the body but often on the face. Thus, following ulcers of the mouth, the lips would swell up and become bloody and livid. This so disfigured the features of the face that *spinturnicium* was the name given to a woman who had been thus deformed, whose disgusting lip resembled the grimace of a harpy (*spinturnix*). The *fici*,\* *mariscæ* and *chiaæ*, which were constantly produced in affections of the anus, resisted the iron and fire of a periodic treatment; the patient soon fell back into the hands of the operator. "From your depilated anus," says Juvenal, "the physician laughingly detaches chancrous tubercles (*podice levi caeduntur humidæ, medico ridente, mariscæ*)." This shameful effect of debauchery was so common, especially among the people, who neglected to care for themselves, and among whom the disease was passed on from father to son, that a superlative epithet, *ficosus*, *ficosissimus*, was invented to describe persons afflicted with these ulcers and tubercles. In the Priapic Odes\*\* may be seen the libertine with more *fici* than any other walking among the poets (*inter eruditos ficosissimus ambulat poetas*). Martial, in one of his epigrams entitled *De familia ficiosa*, draws for us a frightful picture of this family, and, at the same time, of all his con-

\*Translator's Note:—Literally, "figs"—see below.

\*\*Translator's Note:—The *Priapeia*, a collection of various authors.

temporaries: "The wife has 'figs', the husband has 'figs', the daughter has 'figs', as well as the son-in-law and the grandson. Neither the steward, the farmer, the journeyman nor the laborer are exempt from these shameful ulcers. Young and old, all have 'figs', and, the astonishing thing is, not one of their fields has fig-trees." Purulent excretions and gonorrhoeas were not less frequent than tumors, which they preceded or accompanied; but physicians, at least in theory and in their writings, failed to distinguish, among these inflammatory infections of the urethra and the vagina, those which were the result of unclean relations. It may be supposed that these latter betrayed themselves by special characteristics, notably by an ulcer which was termed rust (*rubigo*). "The *rubigo*," says an ancient commentator on the *Georgics* of Virgil, "is properly, as Varro attests, a result of shameful pleasure, and is also called an ulcer. This disease ordinarily comes from an abundance and superfluity of humors, known in Greek as *satyriasis*." It was the name of this ulcer which was applied to the rust on wheat that had been altered by humidity and moisture. The passage which we have quoted from Servius, who relies upon the authority of Varro, is sufficient to establish an opinion inspired in us by an examination of the *satyriasis* of the ancients. This malady, so common with them, was none other than the acute blennorrhoea (gleet) of our days. There was also a species of *satyriasis* brought on ordinarily by venereal excesses, and especially by the dangerous stimulants which were employed as an aid to those excesses. "This *satyriasis*," says Coelius Aurelianus, "is a violent ardor of the senses (*vehemens veneris appetentia*); it draws its name from the properties of an herb which the Greek called *satyrion*. Those who employ this herb are provoked to the acts of Venus by erections of the genital parts. But there are also similar preparations destined to excite the senses to the venereal act. These preparations, known as aphrodisiacs, are bitter, exciting and deadly in their effect upon the nerves." Coelius Aurelianus thus describes *satyriasis*, in accordance with the lessons he had received from his master, Themison, who had been the first to observe this malady, and who treated it by applications of leeches, which do not appear to have been employed before his time.

The bloody excretions, rusty and whitish in color, the losses of leucorrhoea, afflicted so generally the women of Rome that they

invoked Juno under the name of *Fluonia*, beseeching the goddess to free them from these disagreeable inconveniences, which were not always the result of childbed, and which frequently were to be traced to an impure germ. The women affected with these unhealthy excretions were known as *ancunnuentae*, a bizarre word which appears to have been formed from the obscene substantive, *cunnus*, rather than derived from the verb *cunire*, to soil one's diaper, as Festus assumes. These various maladies brought with them, almost always, a swelling of the inguinal glands and, from lack of care or proper régime, produced a separation of these glands. The aster was looked upon as an efficacious remedy against affections of the groins, and this plant was called *bubonium*, from the Greek *bubonion*. The name of the remedy was soon applied to the malady, or at least to its symptoms, and under this name of *bubon* all sorts of pustules, abscesses and ulcers which had their seat in the groins were confused. We believe that we can make a verbal comparison which may be able to throw some light upon the common causes of this inguinal malady. The Romans had coined a verb *imbubinare*, meaning to soil with impure blood; this verb was used especially of women during their menstrual indisposition. The same expression was also used for all acrid excretions, and a celebrated verse in the fragments of old Lucilius compares two different stains which a debauchee of double purpose had encountered: *haec te imbubinat, et contra te imbulbitat ille*. And yet, Julius Caesar Scaliger\* proposes to read *imbulbinat* in place of *imbulbitat* and, consequently, without thoroughly rendering the Latin word-play, to translate the passage thus: "She gives you buboes, and he, on the contrary, gives you tubercles."\*\*

We are astonished at not finding in the poet more allusions to a malady which must have been very widespread among the Romans, namely, excretions of the rectum, that infamous stain of ancient debauchery. In our opinion, one must look for a description, or at

\**Translator's Note*:—The sixteenth-century physician and scholar, Rabelais' contemporary and enemy.

\*\**Translator's Note*:—According to the definitions of *bubinare* (from which *imbubinare* is derived) and of *imbulbitare* given by the sixth-century grammarian, Festus, who quotes the passage in question, this Lucilian fragment should, literally, be rendered "She soils you with menstrual blood, while he befouls you with faeces."† (Festus: "*bubinare est menstruus mulierum sanguine inquinare*. Lucilius: *Haec, inquit, te imbubinat, et contra te imbulbitat. Imbulbitare est puerili stercore inquinare, dictum ex fimo, quod Graeci appellant bolbiton.*")



least for a treatise on this shameful malady, to the paragraph which Celsus has devoted to hemorrhoids. Out of modesty rather than out of ignorance, in the class of hemorrhoids had been included all the analogous excretions, whatever their cause or nature. There can be no doubt of this, when we see Celsus prescribing, in certain cases, remedies for the hemorrhoidal flux and the tumors which accompany the employment of caustics and astringent plasters. We do not believe that one is to recognize this as the disease known as *clazomenae*, which authorities have classified among affections of the anus. According to Pierrugues, these were fissures or tears in the womb, indicated by Celsus, and their nickname is derived from the city of Clazomenae in Ionia, where abominable habits had rendered this affection almost universal, although it was not limited to this dissolute city. We see, rather, in these *clazomenae* certain tuberculous fungi, which grew in the neighborhood of the pubic region, and we shall adopt the etymology proposed by Facciolati, *plazonenos*, broken or fractured. Moreover, there is a famous epigram of Ausonius which enables us to glimpse the true character of the *clazomenae*; "When you tear away the vegetation which makes your anus bristle, bathed in hot water, when you rub with pumice-stone the *clazomenae* which grow out of your loins, I cannot make out what is the true cause of your disease, unless it be that you have had the courage to contract a twofold malady and that, a woman in the rear, you have remained a man in front." Such is the horrible epigram which the Abbé Jaubert, Martial's translator, has not dared to render, and which commentators do not appear to have understood:

*Sed quod et elixio plantaria podice velles  
Et teris incusas pumice clazomenas;  
Causa latet; bimarem nisi quod patientia morbum  
Appetit, et tergo foemina, pube vir es.\**

For the rest, there was nothing surprising in the presence of *clazomenae* at Rome; for Rome under the emperors was invaded by foreigners who brought there, undoubtedly, their maladies as they did their manners. "I cannot suffer, O Romans," cries Juvenal, "I cannot suffer Rome to become Greek; and yet this Achæan scum makes up but a small portion of the inhabitants of Rome. For a

\*Translator's Note:—This is the Epigram which Lacroix has just translated.

long time, the Orontes of Syria has flowed into the Tiber, and it has brought with it its language, its customs, its harps, its flutes, its drums and its courtezans, who prostitute themselves in the Circus. Go to, then, you who are inflamed at the sight of a barbaric she-wolf, coiffed in a painted mitre!" The poets and Latin writers have not failed to brand thus the foreign guest of Rome, who may be accused, above all, of having corrupted Roman manners by bringing to that city their own vices and national habits of debauchery. It was Phrygia, it was Sicily, it was Lesbos, it was the whole of Greece which had corrupted the ancient Roman austerity. Lesbos taught the Romans all the turpitudes of Lesbian love; Phrygia sent them her effeminate (*Faemineus Phryx*, says Ausonius): those young slaves with long flowing locks, with great earrings, with long-sleeved tunics and with red and green buskins. Lacedaemonia, the proud Sparta, also sent a colony of *gitones* and *tribades*.\* Juvenal pictures for us Lacedaemonian infamy which has tormented, without plausible result, the imagination of scholiasts and translators: *Qui Lacedaemonium pytismate lubricat orbem*. Martial cites the feminine lutes invented by Leda and popularized by the licentious Lacedaemonia (*libidinosae Lacedaemonis palaestras*). And Sybaris, and Tarentum, and Marseilles! "Sybaris has taken possession of the seven hills!" murmurs Juvenal, who regrets always the Roman simplicity of the early centuries; Sybaris, the queen of pleasures and of venereal maladies. Tarentum (*Molle Tarentum*, says Horace) was there at the same time, with its handsome lads, with their perfumed skins, their depilated members and their bodies nude under garments of transparent stuff, as though they had been nymphs. Marseilles likewise offered her children, trained to debauchery, and their rôle was frequently a *manual* one, as witness this passage from the comedy of Plautus: "Where are you, who wish to practice the manners of Marseilles? If you wish to lend me your hand (*si vis subigitare me*), the occasion is a good one."\*\* One might never come to an end in enumerating the cities in foreign lands which had been of service in the demoralization of Rome. We must not forget Capua and the Oscans; these latter, who peopled a part of the Cam-

\*Translator's Note:—"A woman who practices lewdness with herself or with other women." (Andrews.)

\*\*Translator's Note:—*Subigitore* means to get under one, to lie with illicitly (ante-classical), to work upon, incite (post-classical).

*pania*, were so degraded that their name had become synonymous with the most humiliating form of prostitution. Ausonius composed an epigram against Eunus Syriacus, *inguinum liguritor*\*, a past master in the art of the Oscans (*Opicus magister*). One is dismayed at the number of inveterate and mysterious maladies which must have existed in those depraved districts given over to lustful pleasures.

There came from Greece as many physicians as courtezans; but these physicians, whom Roman prejudice pursued everywhere with a contempt which even reached the point of hatred, were less concerned with making radical cures than they were with gaining silver. They became rich rapidly, when their reputation had marked them out as the ones best fitted for dealing with a particular affection; but the public health, despite the progress of methodic medicine, showed no improvement. It is permissible to judge of this from the maladies which were given a preference in the investigations of science. The preferred subject was always leprosy, with its numerous varieties. Each practicing physician of renown invented a new remedy against some local manifestation of this chronic pestilence. There were a multitude of eye-salves for ocular infections, a multitude of local applications for ulcers, of gargles for asthmas and of plasters for tumors, which proves that affections more or less leprous and venereal in character had been propagated to an incalculable extent. Next to Musa, the physician most in vogue was Vettius Valens, less known for his medical and surgical talents than for his clandestine relations with Messalina. He enjoyed, undoubtedly, thanks to his mistress, more than one opportunity for first-hand acquaintance with the love-maladies. At the same time, another pupil of Themison was practicing at Rome; Meges of Sidon, especially, was curing leprous tumors, and was treating with success scrofulous swelling of the breast. He was eclipsed by his fellow disciple, Thessalus of Tralles, who possessed neither his colleague's wisdom nor experience, but who boasted of being the "conqueror" among ancient physicians (*iatronikes*). This Thessalus, whom Galen describes as a "fool" and an "ass", had the audacity to pretend to perform sudden cures by employing the most violent medicines in strong doses. He achieved, as a matter of fact, a few brilliant successes in the treatment of leprosy, ulcer and scrofulas. This treatment seems to have constituted all the med-

\*Translator's Note:—"Groin-glutton."

icine he knew; leprosy, which was prevalent everywhere, appears to have been the only malady with which he dealt. As the number of patients increased, Thessalus found it well, also, to increase the number of physicians, and although he asked only six months to make his pupils as clever as himself, behold the ones who came to listen to his lectures: cooks, butchers, tanners and other artisans renounced their trades in order to follow in the footsteps of Thessalus, who walked abroad accompanied by a train of fanatic disciples. Physicians could not fail, therefore, to drop in public esteem. The great affair was always the curing of leprosy. Soranus of Ephesus came to Rome under Trajan and brought with him various drugs and preparations. Moschion, one of Soranus' rivals, busied himself particularly with the diseases of women and the study of the sexual parts; he treated the "whites" by energetic means, which stopped them on the spot.

In addition to these methodic physicians, we find a throng of empirics, antidote-mongers and drug-vendors. They were still more condemned and abhorred than the physicians. Horace does not feel that he is offering them any insult, when he puts them on the same footing with jugglers, beggars, parasites and prostitutes (*ambubajarum collegia, pharmacopolae*). These charlatans concentrated upon those shameful maladies which offered a vast field for the employment of their pharmacopoeia. Among the empirics, however, a number of learned botanists and a number of ingenious manipulators were to be distinguished. Under Tiberius, Menecrates, inventor of the diachylum, compounded plasters which were often efficacious against eruptions, tumors and scrofulas; Servilius Damocrates manufactured excellent emollient-plasters; Asclepiades Pharmacion cured malignant ulcers. Appollonius of Pergamus cured asthma; Criton cured the leprosy. As for Andromachus, inventor of theriac, and Dioscorides, the author of a great and celebrated work on materia medica, they appear to have attached more importance to the bite of serpents than to venereal poison, although the latter claimed far more victims.

The study and treatment of this virus interested the school of physicians known as pneumatists, who flourished at Rome during the second century of the modern era, and who included in their ranks Galen and Oribasus. One of these physicians, Archigenus, succeeded in combating leprous affections and had recourse occasionally to castration by way of diminishing the effects of the malady,



which was certainly venereal in the cases in which he sacrificed the virility of his patient. He had thrown a happy light on ulcerations of the matrix. Another pneumatist, not less clever, Herodotus, was a zealous advocate of sudorifics, which, he asserted, disengaged the pneuma \* of anything heterogeneous it might contain; the employment of sudorifics was, undoubtedly, very effective in the case of maladies of syphilitic origin. These maladies began to be better observed and their medication became more rational. A contemporary of Galen, Leonidas of Alexandria, who seems to have been as fortunate as he was clever in his practice, won distinction in the treatment of the genital parts; his remarks on the ulcers and warts of these parts are still of the greatest interest, as well as what he has to say about swelling and inflammation of the testicles. "It is true," says Kurt Sprengel, in his *History of Medicine*, "he makes no mention of relations with unclean women; but the callous edges which he indicates as the distinctive character of this sort of ulcers indicate the obvious presence of an internal virus." This virus, which was named leprosy or syphilis, existed in a great number of the local maladies which Galen and Oribasus have not described as possessing venereal symptoms, but which they treated empirically, relying on the old emollients, which came from the Orient, like the maladies themselves, which were less complicated and more readily recognizable in the land of their birth.

We may attribute to the development of the leprosy or venereal maladies at Rome the establishment of *archiatri*, or public physicians. The first who had borne the title of *archiater*, who had fulfilled the functions of the office in the imperial palace was Andromachus, the Elder, who lived in Nero's time. This *archiater* exercised a supervision over the health not only of the Emperor, but also over that of all the officers of the palace. This task was so complicated that a single physician did not suffice for it, and the number of palatial chief-physicians (*archiatri palatini*) was always on the increase until the time of Constantine. They were sometimes honored with high dignities, and the Emperor described each of them as *praesul spectabilis*, or honorable master. At Rome and in all the cities of the Empire there had been established also popular chief-physicians (*archiatri populares*), who practiced their art gratuitously, in the interest of the people, and who acted, so to speak, as a board of public health.

\**Translator's Note*.—Literally, wind or air; the *spirit*, ethereal portion of the being.

There was, at first, one chief-physician in each of the regions of Rome, there being therefore, fourteen for the whole city; but this number was doubled and tripled, and soon they were as numerous as the priestesses of Venus. Antoninus Pius regulated and perfected this noble institution; he decreed that ten popular chief-physicians should be named for the large cities, seven for cities of the second class, and five for the smallest cities. The *archiatri* formed in each city a medical college which had its own pupils. This college was recruited by voting upon a list of candidates presented to it by the municipality in the case of a vacancy. The municipality thus assured itself that the health and lives of its citizens should be entrusted only to men who were upright and well trained. These *archiatri* enjoyed various privileges, which bore witness to the deference and protection accorded them by the authorities. They were paid at the expense of the State, through the decurion, who saw to it that their wages were delivered to them without any being held back. The State accorded them this treatment, according to the Justinian code, in order that they might be able to furnish free medical assistance to the poor, and that they might not be obliged, in order to live, to demand a remuneration for their services. They might, however, accept the recompense which a patient offered them out of gratitude; but they must wait for this until the patient had been cured. The *archiatri* were exempt from providing lodgings for troops, from appearing in ordinary courts of justice, from accepting the post of guardian or curator and from paying any war-tax, either in silver, wheat or horses. Finally, whoever dared offend or insult them in any manner was exposed to arbitrary punishment and often to a considerable fine. It is altogether likely, therefore, that these physicians of the poor were not those ill-famed Greeks who had come to Rome to sell antidotes, to cut off and cauterize warts, to bathe and dress ulcers, when not plying the still lower trade of *lenocinium*, and when not submitting to their patients' vilest whims.

The popular *archiatri*, there is no doubt, were under the aedile's immediate authority; legal medicine resulted, then, from this organization; but it is impossible to specify what it embraced or what its functions may have been in the policing of prostitutes. We do not possess, on this subject, one single text to guide or even enlighten us. The probabilities are such as to lead us to suppose that these physicians of the various wards or regions, kept an open eye on the health

of the registered *meretrices*. It is possible, even, that these prostitutes were bound to submit to the visits and the surveillance of certain special physicians, seeing that the Vestals and the gladiators had their own. The code of Theodosius speaks formally of the Vestals and the gymnasia. Two ancient inscriptions set forth the functions of the physicians of the Circus, and one of these gives us the name of Eutyclus, physician at the morning games (*medicus ludi matutini*). It is, then, quite natural that the *meretrices* should have had also their physicians, more experienced and wiser than the others in the treatment of obscene maladies. As to the courtezans who were not under the aedile's jurisdiction, they probably preferred to physicians those old women called *medicae*, who were not merely midwives (*obstetrices*), since they devoted as much attention to magic as to empirical medicine. The name of *medica* which they assumed in the practice of their profession proves that they practised it often with the authorization of the aedile and of the college of *archiatri*. Gruter reports this inscription: SECUNDA L. LIVILLAE MEDICA, but he does not explain it. This L. Livilla, did she have in her house two women slaves who were expert in the healing art, two midwives, or two makers of unguents and antidotes? Or, may we not rather be dealing here with a single *medica*, happy in her cures, *secunda*? It is to be understood, moreover, that the women who, in their accouchements, did not receive the aid of a physician, but rather those of the *obstetrix*, did so often because they did not wish to confide themselves to the indiscreet gazes of a man, especially when they happened to be afflicted with some secret or disgraceful malady. There must, then, have been women physicians who treated the affections of women, and when the latter were rich enough to afford a certain number of slave girls and servant maids, there must have been among them a domestic physician charged with directing and watching over the health of the mistress. There were also, certainly, free or freed-women who practiced medicine and surgery on their own account, and it was to them that the women of the people, who were ashamed of placing themselves in the hands of other physicians, repaired.

An epigram of Martial against Lesbia, a Greek courtesan who enjoyed some vogue, alludes to one of these sexual maladies which the women, even the most shameless ones, would have blushed to divulge to a physician of another sex than their own: "Each time that you get up from your chair, I have often remarked, my unfortunate Les-

bia, that your tunic lasciviously clings to your behind (*paedicant miseram, Lesbia, te tunicae*) and that in order to detach it, you draw it to the right and to the left with so much effort that you draw from yourself tears and groans; for the cloth adheres to your rump and penetrates your rectum, like a vessel caught between two rocks of the Symplegades. Should you like to be rid of this shameful inconvenience? I will teach you a way: neither get up nor sit down!" It was for local affections of the same sort that sitting baths were often recommended by Celsus and by the Roman physicians. The piece of furniture which was made use of in taking these baths, as frequent in good health as in a state of disease, was of different forms, square, round or oval, in terra cotta, in bronze and even in silver. It was called the *solium*, as though a woman, in occupying it, were seated on a throne, before or after the most delicate act of royalty. An ancient commentator of Martial says that the women of Rome, matrons or courtezans, during the period of Asiatic lust and luxury, would have refused their favors to their lovers or their husbands, if they had not been permitted to bathe themselves (*abluere*), in a bidet of silver. These ablutions became more frequent as the women became less healthy and the health of men more exposed. To these ablutions, and to those which took place incessantly in the baths and rubbing-rooms, to the massages and fomentations which always accompanied them, might be attributed many cures of recent or light maladies; in any case, the development of venereal affections encountered a powerful obstacle in the daily and almost constant habit of sudorific baths.

Physicians, especially those who possessed a numerous and rich clientele, certainly disdained to lower themselves by treating secret maladies; they did not undertake such cases except with repugnance, in the hope of being generously rewarded. This medical disdain with regard to this species of malady impresses us as due to the very habits of these celebrated physicians, who would come to visit their patients with a procession of twenty, thirty and sometimes a hundred disciples, as Martial tells us. The number of these disciples indicated, proportionally, the merit or, rather, the reputation of the master and, following the latter, all would feel the patient and diagnose the disease. There is no need to demonstrate the fact that a venereal malady would not lend itself thus as a spectacle for medical observation and as a subject for the jocularities of a physician's suite. There were,



accordingly, physicians or drug-vendors who took upon themselves the treatment of secret maladies, and who surrounded with mystery and a tested discretion that treatment which empiric medicine was too often forced to abandon to surgery. An obscene disease, long neglected at first, then treated largely by empiricism, would ordinarily end in a terrible operation, of which Martial speaks in the following epigram. "Baccara, the Greek, confides the cure of his shameful parts to a physician, his rival; Baccara will be a eunuch." Another epigram of Martial, on the death of Festus, permits us to suppose that patients frequently despaired of a cure and slew themselves to escape incurable infirmities and a lingering agony. Such was the end of the Emperor Domitian's friend, the noble Festus, who, afflicted with a disease which was eating away his throat, a horrible disease, which had already invaded his face, resolved to die and consoled his friends in person before stoically striking himself with a dagger like the great Cato.

Cures were, must have been, long and difficult, when the disease had had time to spread and take root. Charlatans, who sold, without supervision, a quantity of drugs, in tablets and in rolls bearing their seal, profited necessarily from the embarrassing situation in which the patient, deprived of a physician, found himself. In many circumstances, superstition undertook the task of struggling against the malady, the progress of which it could not even arrest. The wretched patient would go from temple to temple, from god to goddess, with offerings, prayers and vows. The patients who had the means to have votive tablets painted had these tablets hung up in the sanctuaries of Venus, of Priapus, of Hercules or of Aesculapius. It is permissible to believe that decency was respected in these allegorical paintings. Nevertheless, it was a habit, also, to hang up about the altars of all the divinities figurative representations of the diseased organs in platinum, in terra cotta, in wood, in stone or in precious metal. Expiatory sacrifices were offered, in which cakes made of pure flour, in the form of the sexual parts, and which assumed the most extravagant proportions, were employed. The priests of certain gods and goddesses ate no other bread than these obscene cakes, which libertines also preserved for their joyous tables: *Illa silegineis pinguescit adultera cunnis*, says Martial, who attributes to this pastry an action favorable to embonpoint. The chapels and the temples which saw the most of these patients and their offerings were those the priests

of which dabbled in medicine. Moreover, everybody had the right to call himself a physician at Rome and to make drugs. The secret maladies opened a vast field for the speculations of the charlatan, and among these speculators, the oculists were not the least ingenious; the barbers also did not limit themselves to the comb and razor; the barbers, those astute lenons, who always had their hands stretched out for all the gain to be had from Prostitution, regarded as their peculiar property the maladies which came from it; the slaves of the baths, the *unctores* and the *aliptes* of both sexes, knew, naturally, all the health-secrets of their clients, and after having furnished them the means of debauchery, they furnished them the means of cure; until, in the end, the venereal maladies became so common and commonplace that each person ended by evolving a hygiene for his own use, and might, at need, treat himself, without taking anyone into his confidence, and without having to fear any indiscretion.

And yet, these maladies, so numerous, so varied and so singular among the ancients, have remained in the background, and the greatest physicians of antiquity appear to have been a party to a tacit understanding that such afflictions were to be hidden under Aesculapius' cloak. But we may readily imagine what these diseases were like, when we think of the frightful degeneration of manners in the Rome of the emperors; when we see Prostitution lying in wait for infants as they leave the cradle, seizing upon them with a cruel joy before they have attained their seventh year. "May my good genius confound me," cries the Quartilla of Petronius, "if I ever remember being a virgin! (*Junonem meam iratam habeam, si unquam me meminerim virginum fuisse!*)" The venereal evil was inherent in Prostitution, and spread everywhere with it. If the health of a master became suspect, that of all his slaves ran great risks. A Roman orator, Acherius, a contemporary of Horace, dared to say, proudly, in pleading a criminal case: "Indecency is a crime in a free man, a necessity in a slave, a duty in the freed man (*impudicitia, inquit Acherius, in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in libero officium!*)" It is Coelius Rhodiginus who reports, in his *Antiquae Lectiones*, this abominable apothegm of the *paedicones*.

## CHAPTER XXI

WE KNOW nothing of the services which the *medicae* rendered to women in those delicate circumstances in which the health of the latter called for the eye and hand of a person of their own sex; we are reduced to conjectures, very plausible, it is true, on this secret chapter of the healing art, which the writers of antiquity have left shrouded with an impenetrable veil. But if we are unable fully to comprehend from well-established authorities, the rôle which the *medicae* played in amorous therapeutics, we shall find no difficulty in establishing their active and often useful function not only in cases of pregnancy and childbirth, but even more in the mysterious preparation of cosmetics, perfumes and philtres. There were, undoubtedly, at Rome, and in the principal cities of the Roman empire, certain *medicae juratae*, as Anianus calls them in his *Annotations on the Theodosian Code*: "Whenever there is doubt as to the pregnancy of a woman, five sworn midwives, that is to say, those having licenses to practice medicine (*medicae*), receive an order to visit this woman (*ventrem jubentur inspicere*).” But beyond these emeritus practitioners, who probably had to pass a medical examination, and who were not subject to the control of the popular *archiatri*, many women, especially foreign women, freed-women or even slaves, devoted themselves to the study of occult medicine and combined with this art, whether they had studied it or not, the trade of the perfumer and the frequently criminal practices of magic. Hyginus, in his collection of mythological fables, tells us, thus, on what occasion it was that medicine was first practiced by a woman in Greece. In the most remote times, there were men who assisted women in childbirth, although modesty had to suffer from the assistance it was obliged to accept. But a young Athenian woman, Agonodice by name, resolved to free her sex from this dishonorable necessity, at which Juno was indignant; so she cut her hair, took the habit of a man and went to take lessons from a celebrated physician, who instructed her in the art of childbirth, and who made of her an excellent midwife. Then she commenced to supplant her masters and to carry out her plan; she proved to be so adroit, so clever, so decent, above all, that the matrons in childbed would have no other physician. It is probable

that Agonodice revealed her sex to them under pledge of secrecy; for soon no woman in Athens would have recourse in child delivery to the aid of the physicians. The latter were astonished at first; they were irritated, and ended by combining against the young rival, who had taken away their clientele. No one but Agonodice was to be seen at the bed of women in childbirth, and these women smiled on her and spoke to her with an unwonted familiarity. Her youth, her charming countenance, her graces and her merits provoked calumny; it was rumored that she possessed the art of converting into pleasure the pains of childbirth; but it was not long until she was denounced to the magistrate as being immodest and the corrupter of decent women. She did not respond to her accusers and appeared before the Areopagus. There, without alleging anything in her own defense, she opened her tunic and revealed her sex, which won her absolution. The physicians were convinced, and the people demanded the repeal of an ancient law which forbade women to practice the healing art. This story would tend to prove that medicine was always practiced afterward by men and women indiscriminately, and that the latter reserved for themselves almost exclusively, at Rome as at Athens, the treatment of diseases peculiar to their sex.

The women who took up medicine, and especially private medicine, were very numerous and of different classes: the *medicae*, the most in esteem for their knowledge and their character, undoubtedly dealt with all branches of the art; the *obstetrices* limited themselves to the rôle of midwife; the *adsestrices* were but aides or pupils of the midwives; then, in the last class, a numerous and varied one, came the perfumers and the magicians, all of whom, or almost all, belonged or had belonged to the army of prostitutes. This trade was the refuge of old courtezans; it was a favorite employment of procuresses. Under the general name of *sagae* were included the various species of ointment-mongers and philtre-vendors, who often manufactured their own wares, with magical ceremonies invented in Thessaly. But the *sagae* were not all magicians; the majority were not familiar with even the simplest and most innocent elements of this execrable art; many were in absolute ignorance as to the composition of the drugs they sold; these drugs frequently caused sad accidents, which justice, however, winked at; some of these women were but a sort of unauthorized midwife, whose business was the performing of abortions and who surrounded with invocations and amulets the birth of illegitimate



children. It is known that the number of these births was considerable at Rome, and that each morning there were to be seen in the streets, at the thresholds of the houses, under the porticoes and in the ovens of the bakeshops, the corpses of new-born babes, who had been devoted to certain death by being exposed naked on the hard stones as soon as they had come out of the maternal belly. It was the *saga* who performed the frightful mission of infanticide, and who stifled, in the folds of her robe, the innocent victims who had been condemned to perish violently. Sometimes, it is true, the mother had pity on the fruit of her entrails and contented herself with exposing the child, wrapped in its swaddling clothes, either on the shore of the Velabrian Pool (*lacus Velabrensis*) or in the Vegetable Market (*Foro olitorio*), at the foot of the Milk Column (*Columna lactaria*); there, at least, these unfortunate orphans were taken in and adopted at the expense of the State, which acted as their guardian, inflicting upon them, however, the stigma of bastardy. It happened, also, that sterile matrons, *suppostrices* (infamous shrews who made a trade of changing infants in their capacity of nurse), and citizens who were disappointed at having no heirs would come to choose, among these poor little abandoned ones, those who might best serve their honorable or dishonorable designs. Sometimes the Velabrum \* would echo with cries in the darkness, and there might be seen, passing like spectres, the *sagae* or the mothers themselves, bringing their tribute to this hideous Minotaur, in what was known as the act of exposition (*expositio*) of infants on the public highway. It is evident that the origin of the French word *sage-femme* must be derived from that of *saga*, which possessed only an unsavory connotation, and which Nonius employs as a synonym for a woman instigator to debauchery (*indagatrix ad libidinem*).

The *sagae* were ready to assist in abortions, which they practiced at the beginning of pregnancy (*aborsus*) or in the last months of gestation (*abortus*). These abortions, which the law was supposed to punish but which it avoided investigating, because it would have had too much to do, became so frequent under the emperors that the least shameless women did not fear to prevent in this manner an increase in their family. There were certain potions which procured, with no danger, a prompt and easy abortion; but use was also

\*Translator's Note:—A street on the Aventine Hill, frequented by oil-dealers and cheese-merchants.

sometimes made of harmful drugs, which killed at once the mother and her offspring. In this case, the *obstetrix* or the *saga* who, from imprudence, from ignorance or otherwise, had committed a double murder, was treated as a poisoner; and the poor wretch was given the extreme penalty. As to those who administered these abortive potions with the knowledge of the pregnant woman, the State might confiscate a part of their goods and send them to prison, for the reason that they set a bad example, as the jurisconsult, Paulus, remarks. But the punishment of this crime was very rare, and it soon became impossible; for every one was guilty of the same offence and the empress often set the example, on the advice of the emperor, without even having the decency to conceal this outrage to nature. The most ordinary motive for repeated abortions was none other than the fear of spoiling the beauty of a smooth belly and a beautiful throat, by sacrificing then to the more or less serious consequences of a painful pregnancy and a wracking childbirth. "Do you think," says Aulus Gellius, speaking indignantly of these criminal stepmothers, "do you think that nature has given breasts to women merely as gracious protuberances, designed to adorn the bosom rather than to nourish infants? Acting on this idea, the majority of our marvelous ladies (*prodigosae mulieres*) do all they can to dry up and exhaust that sacred fountain of the life of the human race and run the risk of corrupting or diverting their milk, as though it spoiled their beauty. It is the same folly which leads them to have abortions committed with the aid of various harmful drugs, so that the smooth surface of their belly may not be wrinkled and sink under the weight of their burden and the travail of childbirth." The abortion was, frequently, motivated by reasons still more culpable; sometimes, a married woman desired to destroy the proof of her adultery; sometimes, a woman libertine, feeling her desires and amorous ardors becoming extinct under the influence of pregnancy, would employ a criminal means to avoid losing that which she preferred to the joys of maternity. This enervation of the senses during gestation was not, however, general; and some women, on the contrary, whose imagination had been heightened by debauchery, discovered that they were never more ardent in love than during pregnancy, which assured them, at the same time, against risks of a similar sort. Thus, Julia, daughter of Augustus, did not give herself to her lovers except when she was pregnant by her husband, Agrippa, and the period of her preg-

nancy proved to be no interruption to her pleasures. Macrobius reports that she would reply to those who expressed astonishment at the fact that her children, despite her derelictions, always resembled her husband: "As a matter of fact, I never take passengers aboard until the ship is full (*at enim numquam nisi navi plenâ tollo vectorem*)."\* As soon as a woman became pregnant, advice and alluring offers were not lacking to persuade her to make a sacrifice of her infant to her beauty; she was at once surrounded by the insistent abortionists. "She hides from you her pregnancy," says a character in the *Truculentus* of Plautus, "for she fears that you will persuade her to consent to an abortion (*ut abortioni operam daret*) and to the death of the child she bears."

The pregnancies and abortions gave the *sagae* of Rome much to do; but this was but the least of the mysteries of their art. They drew still more profit from their ointments, their perfumes, their philtres and their evil charms. These latter resembled the sorceries which took place in Greece, especially in Thessaly, at a remote period; and the story which Horace in his *Epodes* gives us of a magical incantation does not differ from the picture which Theocritus had painted of a similar scene three centuries before. The object of these abominable superstitions was, moreover, always the same, at all times, among all peoples. The witch drew lots and compounded philtres. These philtres had for object the reviving of the fires of love and the creation of new, superhuman and inextinguishable ardors; these philtres might change hate into love or love into hate and vanquish all the resistances of modesty or indifference. The Fates were particularly useful in cases of resentment and revenge. This sort of incantation was undoubtedly rarer among the Romans than among the Greeks; but on the other hand, never was the science of love-philtres carried further, never was it more widespread than at Rome under the Caesars. Horace makes us acquainted with the abominable practices with which the *sagae* of his time defiled themselves in the manufacture of amorous philtres. Horace had been the lover of a Neopolitan perfumer, named Gratidia, who had been vowed to public execration under the name of Canidia. Horace, in his liaison with Canidia, whom he ended by detesting as much as he had loved her, had been initiated, with horror, into the blackest secrets of the magician's art: "They (the *sagae*) had continual relations with the cour-

\**Translator's Note*.—See Rabelais, Book First, Chapter III, and elsewhere.

tezans," says M. Walckenaer in his excellent *Life and Writings of Horace*, "they were of the same class, and they intermingled in all sorts of love intrigues." Gratidia was one of the most celebrated among the *sagae* of Rome, thanks to the poetic wrath of Horace, who could not forgive her for having sold herself to an old libertine named Varus; this perfume-vendor was still sufficiently young and sufficiently beautiful to find someone to whom to sell her charms, and these charms were worthy of being the object of regret on the part of an abandoned lover. The Scholiasts of Horace have thought that the poet was reproaching Gratidia especially with having exercised over him her power in the making of love beverages, and with having deprived him of his youth, his vital forces, and his health. Horace, as a matter of fact, was constantly afflicted with a disease of the eyes, which might, without any insult to Canidia, be attributed to the philtres and the malady of Venus.

The Esquiline hill was the ordinary scene of these invocations and magic sacrifices. This mount served as a cemetery for slaves, who were buried pell-mell without a coffin; by night there were no living persons in this solitude, peopled with the dead, except thieves who found safety there and sorceresses who came there to accomplish their shady tasks. At the other side of the Esquiline, near the Porta Metia, surrounded with scaffolds and crosses from which hung the corpses of the crucified, the *Carnifex*, or hangman, had his isolated dwelling, as though to keep a watch over his subjects; a monstrous statue of Priapus likewise kept watch over this infected and hideous retreat of the *sagae* and of robbers. There, by the pale light of the moon, Canidia might have been seen running with naked feet, disheveled hair, uncovered bosom and a body wrapped in an ample cloak, in the manner of her accomplice, the old Sagana. Horace had seen them, these horrible wenches, tearing with their teeth a black sheep, pouring the blood of the animal into a ditch, scattering about them the tatters of palpitating flesh, evoking the Manes and interrogating Destiny. Dogs and serpents came to witness this somber sacrifice, and the moon would veil its bloody face in order not to light up the frightful spectacle. Priapus himself had a horror of the sight, and he burst in two the trunk of a fig tree on which his image had been grossly carved. At the noise of the splitting wood, the two witches took fright and fled without completing their evil task, beside themselves and spilling parts of themselves along the way: Canidia



her teeth; Sagana her pyramidal peruke and her supply of herbs and constellated rings. They came back, however, on another night, to the Esquiline hill for a mystery still more abominable: they had kidnaped a young child from its family; they had buried it alive in a ditch in which slaves were buried, with the head of the victim alone protruding above the ground; they offered it cooked food, the odor of which increased its hunger and its agony. The child conjures them in the name of its mother, in the name of their own children, but Canidia and Sagana are merciless; Canidia burns in a magic fire the wild fig-tree torn from the tombs, the funereal cypress, the wings and eggs of the hoot owl, soaked in the blood of the toad, the poisonous herbs produced by Colchos and Iberia, and the bones taken from the mouth of a famished she-dog. Sagana, her hair bristling, dances in front of the pyre, sprinkling it with lustral water: "O Varus," cries Canidia, biting her nails with her livid teeth, "O Varus, what tears you are going to shed! Yes, these undreamed of philtres will force you soon enough to come back to me, and all the charms of the Marsi will not give you back your reason. I shall prepare and myself pour a beverage which will overcome in you the disgust that I inspire. Yes, the heavens shall fall below the sea, the earth shall rise above the clouds, or else you shall burn for me as bitumen does in these sinister fires." But the weeping child is on the point of expiring; its voice grows weak; its eyeballs are motionlessly fixed on the food exposed in front of its mouth; Canidia arms herself with a dagger and approaches it, in order to open its belly at the moment it breathes its last sigh, for from its desiccated liver and the marrow of its bones a love-drink must be composed (*exsucta uti medulla et aridum jecur amoris esset poculum*): "I vow you to the furies," cries the unfortunate child, in its death rattle, "and this malediction nothing in the world shall be able to ward off from you. I am perishing by your cruelty; but, nocturnal spectre, I will appear to you; my shade shall tear your face with my crooked nails, which are the strength of my gods, the Manes; I will weigh down upon your breathless bosoms, and I will deprive you of sleep by turning you cold with fright. In the streets, the populace shall follow at your heels, obscene old creatures. Then, the wolves and the crows of the Esquiline shall dispute over your members, deprived of burial!"

All the rites of the *sagae* were not so terrible, and ordinarily these makers of philtres only went by night to the Esquiline Hill in order

to cook magic plants by the light of the moon, to seek there locks of hair and bones of the dead and to take the fat of a hanged man. It was also necessary to pay them very dearly in order to obtain the benefit of these execrable practices, which were accompanied by the stain of human blood, although, to tell the truth, the life of children was little esteemed at Rome; but the child that was sacrificed, after having been buried alive, must have been stolen from its parents or its nurse; otherwise, its liver and marrow were not of the least potency in procuring the gift of love. Now, the rape of a free-born child might be punished with death. The magical philtres were prepared with one of three objects in view, sought by love or hatred from the art of the *sagae*: to inspire love in the man or woman who did not love; to inspire hatred in the man or woman who was in love; to paralyze and congeal in a man all the ardor and energy of his temperament. This third spell, which the middle-ages so feared under the name of *eagle's knot*, and which criminal jurisprudence has constantly prosecuted, even to our day, was no less detested by the Romans, who were indignant at seeing themselves the butt of its sad effects. The *sagae* excelled in this sort of spell; they knew how to strike with impotence the most invincible constitutions, and all they needed for this was to make knots out of cords or black threads, pronouncing certain words and certain invocations. This was what was called *praeligare*, when the object was to prevent the first transports between a lover and his mistress, between a wife and her husband; *nodum religare*, when it was desired to annihilate and suspend transports which had already existed; the eagle's knot, which was, at all times, the terror of lovers, never had any other origin than in a phantom of the imagination; but the ancients, like the moderns, in attributing to it an invisible power, found in it at least a refuge for their masculine vanity. The Romans had a singular fear of this spell, which seemed to them a shame for the one thus deprived of the privileges of his sex; they looked upon it as so terrible and so tenacious that they avoided even speaking of it: they believed that they were constantly threatened with it, and in order to conjure it away, if they happened to be in love, they formed knots out of cords or thongs which they had first twisted about a statue of Hercules or of Priapus. These sacrifices, which the men offered to these divinities, in secret, upon the altar of the domestic fireside, these sacrifices had no other object than to break the magic knots which an enemy hand might

have been able to form in order to chain their senses and deceive the hope of pleasure. The least allusion to this fatal conspiracy of magic was looked upon as of evil omen, as though one had thereby evoked, by naming the thing, an evil genius. Poets and writers, however old they might be, feared to touch on this delicate subject which, one day or another, might become a personal matter with them and afflict them in their turn; and so, one was careful not to laugh at the misfortune of another. It is with an extreme reserve that Tibullus, in one of his elegies, speaks of the grief of a lover, who seeks in vain and does not find his virile forces, even in the arms of the beautiful Pholoë: "What old woman with her magical chants and powerful philtres," says the poet of love, "has cast over you a spell during the silent night? Magic causes to pass over into a field the harvest of the neighboring fields; magic arrests the march of the irritated serpent; magic even endeavors to drag the moon from her chariot. But why blame your misfortune on the chants of a sorceress; why blame her philtres? Beauty has no need of magic's aid; but that which renders it impotent is the fact that you have caressed too often that handsome body, that you have kissed her too long, and that you have too often pressed her thighs against your own." (*Sed corpus tetigisse nocet, sed longa dedisse oscula, sed femori conseruisse femur.*) Tibullus has shown so great a reserve in touching upon this subject of evil augury that the elegy which he devotes to it is filled with reticences and obscurities.

But the philtres which were the most potent and also the most to be feared were those which the *sagae* and the old courtezans compounded, from unknown recipes, without the aid of magic. The sole object of these philtres was to heat the senses and increase the transports of love. A prodigious use was made of these at Rome, in spite of the dangers accompanying such a super-excitation of nature. Every day, a beverage of this sort caused death, madness, paralysis or epilepsy; but this fatal example stopped no one, and the thirst for pleasure imposed silence on reason. These philtres, however, were not all equally deadly, and ordinarily, the accidents which were attributed to them came rather from their abuse than from their moderate use. At first, libertines would content themselves with a minimum dose, which would give them all the fires of youth; but as these fires diminished, they would gradually increase the poisonous dose, to which they owed a few simulated moments of pleasure, until soon the

philtre was without effect upon their exhausted constitution, which spent the last forced sigh of love in the form of madness. In this manner, a number perished before their time, including a friend of Cicero, L. Licin. Lucullus, the model of prodigals and voluptuaries, the poet Lucretius and so many others who went from madness to death. *Aphrodisiaca* was the name given to all these philtres, which were, in general, more or less harmful in their effects, and which had for object the reviving of the fires of Venus. They were administered, also, to women lacking in sensuality and to young girls whose amorous appetites had not been awakened; but wise and reputable physicians highly disapproved of the employment of these aphrodisiacs. "These philtres, which render the complexion pale," cries Ovid in his *Remedia Amoris*, "are of no profit to young girls; these philtres destroy the reason and contain the germs of a furious madness." The majority of these philtres were potions which had to be taken on trust, without knowing the ingredients which superstition or empiricism had put into them. The unfortunate one who exposed himself to poison in order to gain a few instants of sensual pleasure frequently had no other guarantee than the reputation, good or bad, of the *saga* to whom he went to purchase this pleasure. Often, it is true, the potions were composed merely of the juice of herbs: "The plants which stimulate the senses," says Celsus, "are the calamint, thyme, savory, hyssop and, especially, pennyroyal, as well as the rue and the onion" (or rather the mushroom, *cepa*); but often, also, these dangerous beverages included mineral and even animal substances, which were the most terrible of *amatoria*. A beverage of this sort, of which Canidia possessed the recipe, was termed, according to Horace, the *poculum desiderii*, or the *potion of desire*. There were, also, certain natural waters, sulphurous and ferruginous, which were looked upon as favorable to the sensual appetite and inoffensive in their erotic effects. These were the philtres which medicine offered in opposition to those of the perfumers and magicians. These exciting waters, *aquae amatrices*, as they were called, lost almost all their virtue when they were taken far from their source. Martial says, in one of his epigrams: "Hermaphrodite hates the waters which bring love (*odit amatrices Hermaphroditus aquas*);" in another epigram, he appears to give us to understand that waters of this sort were farmed out, or at least possessed, by women, undoubtedly courtezans, who had given them a vogue which



they exploited: "Who is that youth who goes far away from the pure ways of the fountain of Yanthis, and who flees to the Naiad who is the mistress of this fountain (*at fugit ad dominam Naiada*). Is it not Hylas? Too happy because Hercules, the demi-god of Tiryns, is adored in the groves which surround the fountain, and because he keeps so close a watch over his amorous water! Arginus, draw without fear from the spring to give us a drink; the nymphs will do you no harm, but watch out that Hercules does not get the better of you!" These *aquae amatrices* were not then, as a number of scholars have believed, beverages composed and prepared by the hand of a *saga* but, quite simply, mineral waters which, in restoring vigor to a fatigued temperament, disposed the latter naturally to labors of love, appearing thus to call back a vanished youth.

Precise information as to the composition of these philtres is not to be found anywhere in the writers of antiquity. We may understand, moreover, the mystery with which the vendors of philtres surrounded their frequently culpable industry, a mystery which science made no effort to penetrate. They were concerned, merely, with the effects, which were truly prodigious; they were not concerned with causes. The physiologist, Virey, has gathered from the pages of Dioscorides, Theophrastus, Pliny, etc., all the scattered and indecisive details which have permitted him to reconstruct the history of aphrodisiacs among the ancients. He divides them into two principal classes, the vegetable and the animal; among the first he distinguishes stupefying or narcotic drugs; the bitter and aromatic stimulants, the odorants and spirits. The mandragora, the pineapple, the wild-hemp, in which one recognizes the nepenthes of Homer, produced a voluptuous drunkenness, which was prolonged into an indefatigable increase of erotic sensations, and which ended in a delicious loss of memory, to the point of stupefaction and even death. The mushrooms, especially the morels, the larch fungi, the birthworts, the bitter resins, the aromatic herbs and the seeds of these plants, stimulated powerfully the organs of pleasure; spirituous liquors into which had been infused certain odorous flowers produced, similarly, in both sexes, an increase of sensual activity; but these excitants, borrowed from the vegetable kingdom, soon lost all power over the monstrous debauchees, whose object was always to exceed the limits of human endurance, and who sought their models among the gods of their amorous mythology. These, accordingly, had

recourse to redoubtable philtres, by means of which they might, for entire nights, persuade themselves that Jupiter or Hercules had descended from Olympus to be metamorphosed into a man. They sometimes died as a result, without being sated with pleasure, and their frightful priapism would continue for a long time after their death. Insects, fishes and animal substances were, in turn, called upon to take part in this fearful mixture, which bore the characteristic name of *satyrion*. Cantharides, crickets, spiders and many other coleoptera, pulverized and reduced to powder form, or merely infused into the wine, acted with violence on the sexual organs and communicated to them, immediately, a violent irritation, which frequently led to grave affections of the bladder. With the same success, the eggs of the mullet, the cuttle-fish and the turtle were employed, by being mixed with ambergris; but following these prodigies of virility, after long and frenzied transports of love, the victim of his own libertinism would fall into convulsions, which ended only in death. "Whence," cries Juvenal, "those attacks of madness, whence that obscuration of the intelligence, whence that profound forgetfulness of everything!" Juvenal speaks of Thessalian philtres, which a criminal wife made use of to disturb the reason of her husband. Martial, who did not condone the use of these dangerous beverages, merely advises fatigued lovers, or those who have grown cold, to use bulbs (onions, according to one commentator; mushrooms, according to another; spices, in our own opinion): "Let him who does not know how to conduct himself as a man in the amorous arena, let him eat bulbs and he shall be invincible; old man, if your ardor is languishing (*languet anus*) do not cease eating those generous bulbs, and tender Venus will smile once more upon your exploits!"

*Que praestare virum Cypriae certamine nescit,  
Manducet bulbos, et bene fortis erit.  
Languet anus: pariter bulbos ne mandere cesset.  
Et tua ridebit proelia blanda Venus.*

But of all the amatory philtres which were manufactured by the *sagae*, the most celebrated and the most formidable was the hippomane, as to the contents of which scholars are not of the same mind. The writers of antiquity have contributed not a little to leaving in doubt the origin of the hippomane, by attributing it

to two different sources. Virgil, for example, applies the name to a bitter and fetid virus which flows from the vulva of rutting mares: "A sticky virus is distilled from the organ of mares; it is the hippomane, which is too often taken by odious hags and mixed with magic herbs in their conjurations." Juvenal, Lucan, Pliny and Ovid, on the contrary, give the name of hippomane to an excrescence of the flesh, which sometimes shows itself on a new-born colt,\* and which the mare bites off with her teeth and devours before offering her teats to her foal. This excrescence of black flesh, the size of a fig, the villagers were careful to cut away and to preserve with care for sale to the *sagae*, who make use of it in their philtres. It is probable, in view of these different statements, that the *sagae* knew two kinds of hippomane, the second being looked upon as more active and redoubtable than the first. Juvenal shows us Caesonia who, to increase the violence of the potion, puts into it the entire forehead of a nascent colt (*qui totam tremuli frontem Caesonia pulli infudit*). Finally, Juvenal depicts with horror the frightful results of the hippomane, which led to the madness and death of Caligula, the reign of Nero and all the crimes of that reign. *Tanti partus equae!* he cries. "And all this is the fruit of a mare, all that is the work of a female poisoner!"

They were veritable poisoners, those remorseless and nameless old women, the *débris*, as they were, of prostitution and debauchery, who mingled with their philtres not only the excretions of animals, musk, civet, the sperm of the deer, the member of the wolf, the hedgehog, etc., but also the menstrual blood of women and the seminal fluid of men. These horrible mixtures engendered terrifying maladies, which were not sufficient, however, to frighten the libertines and call a halt on excesses. These magicians and *emeritae* added always to their erotic preparations certain ingredients taken from human beings, the marrow of bone, the liver, the testicles, the gall of a child or of a condemned man and, especially, that thin pellicle which sometimes envelopes the head of the new-born as they leave the matrix. The midwives would deftly remove this pellicle, to which they attributed so many singular virtues, and they would sell it very dearly to the makers of amorous philtres, or even to advocates, who believed it would make them more eloquent if they wore it as a talisman. We may deduce that the *sagae* did a large and lucrative

\* *Translator's Note*.—A small black membrane on the forehead of a foal.

business; but none of these learned operators has left us a book containing the recipes which made her reputation and her fortune. The art of perfumery and cosmetics, which the *sagae* also practiced with incredible resources in the way of refinement and inventions, is no longer known to us. Poets and writers of all sorts speak constantly of these perfumes, these cosmetics (*unguenta*), which everywhere accompanied one or the other Venus; but they never get away from vague generalities, and they never initiate us into the innumerable secrets of ancient perfumery, as though these secrets, already known in the time of Homer, who assigns their origin to the gods and goddesses, were only to be handed down from generation to generation under solemn oath. Among the Romans, the passion for perfumes having become as ardent and unrestrained as the passion for sensual pleasures, the trade of the perfumers and the *unguentariae* had made extraordinary progress, and the number of essences, oils, balms, pomades, powders, pastes, cosmetic and aromatic ingredients had been infinitely and daily increased, contributions being levied upon the vegetable, mineral and animal kingdoms of the entire world, by way of creating, through combinations, new and odoriferous mixtures and, at the same time, new pleasures for the sake of sensuality and of love.

The ancients, the Romans above all, could not understand love without perfumes, and, as a matter of fact, the acrid and stimulating perfumes of which they made a profuse employment in their daily life were a marvelous prelude to it. It is known that the musk, the civet, ambergris and other animal odors which they sprinkled over their clothing, in their hair and over all parts of their bodies, do produce a very active effect upon the nervous system and upon the organs of generation. They did not limit themselves to the external use of these perfumes, for without speaking of the energetic philtres reserved for particular circumstances, they did not hesitate to make use of aromatic spices in some quantity in their daily food. It is, undoubtedly, to these permanent causes that we must attribute the appetites, the persistent pruriency, which plagued Roman society, and which precipitated it into all the excesses of physical love. Asiatic lust had brought these perfumes with it, and from that time on, there was so prodigious a consumption of aromatic substances at Rome that one might have fancied that Arabia, Persia and all the Orient would not be sufficient to produce them. Vainly



did a few philosophers, a few virtuous and simple-minded men, unfortunately old men, endeavor to combat this mode, as dangerous for health as it was for manners; in vain was their wise advice repeated in books of morality, even in poetry and in the theatre; no more heed was given their counsels than was paid to their reproaches and their menacing predictions. Rome was soon as perfumed as Sybaris and Babylon. But the more perfumes were thought of and sought after, the more the perfumers, male and female, were despised; these were but aged courtezans and procuresses; they were but old effeminate and infamous lenons. Decent folk, who had need of their services, never entered their shops without hiding the face, whether by day or night. Cicero and Horace speak of them only with a profound disdain. "Add, if you will," says the first in his treatise *De Officiis*, "add those ointment-vendors, the tumblers and the wretched rabble of dice-players." Horace puts on an equal footing the lenon (*auceps*) and the ointment-monger, amid the vile population of a Tuscan town (*tusci turba impia vici*). As to the perfumers, their very name was the greatest insult which might be addressed to a woman who prided herself upon being free-born (*ingenua*) and a citizen. The perfume-shops were but emporiums of prostitution and retreats of debauchery; rich persons had in their own house a laboratory in which they made all the perfumes that they needed and retained one or a number of perfumers among their slaves or freed men.

There must have been certain typical perfumes which announced from afar the character of the person who wore them; his rank, his morals and his state of health; this strong and penetrating odor revealed the necessity of hiding some unpleasant natural odor; this sweet and gentle one was appropriate to elegant matrons, and to men of good taste and a decent way of life; this intoxicating one announced the courtezan, or at least the light and coquettish woman; this enervating and teasing one announced the passage of an effeminate; here was one perfume, there another, and on all sides, in the streets, along the promenade and in the houses, was an indefinable admixture of aromatic odors which ate up the air. The truth is, each man, each woman, each child perfumed himself upon leaving his bed, after the bath, after a meal and when he sought repose; the body was bathed in perfumed oils, which were also poured over the hair; clothing was impregnated with essences; aromatic spices

were burned night and day; they were eaten in all foods and consumed in all drinks. The satirical Lucilius, in order to turn into ridicule this drug-mania, pretended to be astonished that his contemporaries, who took so many perfumes, did not smell worse than they did. "A woman smells good," says Plautus in his *Mostellaria*, "when she does not smell at all, for those old women who load themselves with perfume, those toothless and decrepit ones who cover with rouge the ruins of their beauty, as soon as their sweat is mingled with their perfumes, so soon do they begin to stink like a cook who makes a stew by mixing a number of sauces." It was, principally, in the preludes to the lists of Venus, in order to make use of the antique expression (*palestra venerea*), that perfumes came to the aid of voluptuous pleasures. The two lovers would anoint their entire bodies with embalmed spirits, after having bathed them in odoriferous water; incense was burning in the room, as though for a sacrifice; the bed was surrounded with garlands of flowers and strewn with roses; and the bed, as well as all the furniture, received a rain of nard and cinnamon. The ablutions in aromatic waters were frequently renewed in the course of the long hours of love, amid an atmosphere more perfumed than that of Olympos.

These perfumes, it may be conceived, had been invented by a people who knew what they wanted in the way of pleasure and who knew the means of exciting, prolonging and expanding their pleasures. And so, in growing old, the prostitutes of both sexes devoted themselves by choice to this variety of industry. They thus continued, in a manner, to serve, even though indirectly, the tastes of the public. When they had compounded some new perfume or cosmetic they were proud to give it their name. The perfumer Nicerotas invented the *nicerotiana*, of which Martial praises the stupefying odor (*fragras plumbea nicerotiana*); Folia, the magician, the friend and accomplice of Canidia, discovered an ingenious process for preparing the nard of Persia, which was afterwards called *foliatum*. But ordinarily, the perfume drew its name from the country which furnished its principal ingredient; there was the balm of Mendes, originally of Egypt; the ointment of Cyprus; the nard of Cyprus; the nard of Achaemenium; the oil of Arabia, the oil of Syria, the *malabathrum* of Sidon, etc. The majority of the perfumes, the most potent at least, came from the Orient, and especially from the Arabic peninsula; and so, it was the custom to include, without

distinction, all the products of the perfumers' art under the generic designation of *perfume of Arabia* (*arabicum unguentum*): "Burn," says Tibullus, "burn the perfume which the voluptuous Arab sends us from his rich country!" However, this term, *arabus* or *arabicus*, was applied more particularly to an odorous oil with which women and effeminate men anointed their long tresses. Another oil also was manufactured, one not less esteemed, from the seeds of the myrobolan (*myrobolani*), an aromatic shrub which grew in Arabia. A number of species of perfume, very much sought after, were also derived from a tree of Judea, the balsam, the odoriferous gum of which was called *opobalsamum*; from the amomum (*balsam*) of Assyria, from the myrrh of Orontes, from the sweet marjoram of Cyprus (*amaracus cyprinus*); from the cinnamon of India, etc. But as we have said, we are in almost total ignorance as to the dosages and constituents of these balsamic mixtures, which generally corresponded to some need of the amorous life. The cosmetics, which always included some perfume in their composition, are even more unknown to us than the perfumes of the toilet and the amorous scents; the interested discretion of the vendors and purchasers has barely betrayed the names of a few of these marvelous secrets of preservative, dissimulating and decorative coquetry. In all ages, these secrets have been the best guarded. Thus, we know nothing of that depilatory powder (*dropax unguentum*) with which hair was caused to fall from the body and even from the beard; nothing of that wash for the teeth (*odontotrimma*), destined to render them white and brilliant; nothing of the *diapasmata*, made up in the form of lozenges, by Cosmus, in Martial's time, as a remedy for bad breath;\* nothing of the *malabathrum*, an oily distillation for the hair, etc. Pliny indicates merely a few receipts, that of the oil of quince (*melinum unguentum*), that of the *megalium* and the *telinum*, that, finally, of the ointment royal, which the Parthian kings had used; but we are sufficiently at a loss in attempting to define the properties and advantages of each of these odoriferous cosmetics. All the cosmetics, however, did not commend themselves by their good odor; for example, if one wished, up to an advanced age, to preserve a firm, white and unwrinkled belly, one rubbed it not only with bean-flour, with the leaves of the blight, boiled and salted, but also

\**Translator's Note*:—Cf. "halitosis." The *diapasma* appears to have been a fumi-gating powder, to be sprinkled over objects or over the person.

with urine; women after childbirth did not fail, Pliny tells us, to remove, with applications of urine, the wrinkles and spots which impaired the flawlessness of their abdomens (*aequor ventris*). They had, also, an unquestioning confidence in the efficacy of ass's milk as a means of whitening the skin. It is recalled that Poppaea took every day a milk bath, furnished by fifty asses, which gave out after a few days and which had to be constantly replaced in order that their milk might be always fresh. Since all the Roman ladies were not able to keep asses in their stables, the perfumers had hit upon the idea of condensing the milk of the ass into an ointment and of selling it in solid tablets, which were melted upon being exposed upon the skin. "And yet, hideous to see," says Juvenal, in sketching for us the portrait of a rich coquette, "her face is ridiculously covered with a sort of paste; it exhales the odor of Poppaea's sticky cosmetics, and this paste adheres to her poor husband's lips. She bathes herself in milk, and in order to procure this milk, she would keep in her suite a troop of asses, even if she were exiled to the North Pole. But this face, to which so many different drugs have been applied, and which is covered with a thick crust of baked and liquid flour, should one call it a face or an ulcer?" These epigrams, these insults and maledictions on the part of the poets did not prevent the elderly women of Rome from rouging themselves, from smearing themselves with red and white, from dyeing their hair and retaining, as long as possible, the traces of their fugitive beauty; they turned then with a sort of despair to the last illusions which the art of cosmetics might still have to offer them, seeking to deceive themselves concerning the irreparable disasters of age. Courtezans in the mode, the *famosae* and the *preciosae* especially, dared not grow old, and old age in a woman began at thirty years among the Romans, who cared only for extreme youth and even infancy. One of the priestesses of Venus, named Acco, frightened at the flight of the years, which carried away with them the freshness of her complexion, the brilliancy of her hair, the enamel of her teeth and the graces of her figure, thought to forget her own metamorphosis by not looking any more in her mirror; but one day a lover, whom she had bored with complaints and reproaches, presented her with a fatal mirror, in which she, all of a sudden, beheld her decrepitude; her hair was white, her toothless mouth half open and her eyes were glassy as they brimmed with tears; she was insane, terrified by her own ugliness; and she died



from the sight of what decrepitude had done to her. Her name was handed down by mothers who, to break their children of the habit of picking the skin off their faces, picking their noses with their fingers and pulling out their eyebrows, would threaten them with the wrath of Acco, as with that of a scarecrow.

The *sagae* and the perfumers did not limit themselves to dealing in perfumes and cosmetics; they sold, also, all the objects and all the utensils which might be of use in prostitution: whips, needles, *fibulae*,\* and chastity-clasps, amulets, phalli and a quantity of the gewgaws of libertinism, which antiquity in its greatest depravation has not dared to describe. If the Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine, Lactantius, Tertullian, Arnobius, etc., had not divulged the undreamed of depths of Roman debauchery, we should hesitate to believe that these monstrous refinements had existed, without the law's endeavoring to eradicate and punish them. Thus, it was not merely in the lupanars that employment was made of the *fascinum*, an artificial phallus of leather, cloth or silk which served to deceive nature; it was to be found also in the sleeping chambers of matrons whose husbands neglected them and who did not dare expose themselves to the perils of adultery; it was to be found in the secret assemblies of Lesbian love; it was to be found in the public baths; it was to be found in the sanctuary of the domestic fireside. St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Romans, bears witness to the progress which the doctrines of Sappho had made at Rome, when he says, in speaking of the unworthy descendants of Scipio and Cato: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving into themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." (*Propterea tradidit illos Deus in passiones ignominiae. Nam feminae eorum immutaverunt naturalem usum in eum usum qui est contra naturam. Similiter autem et masculi, relicto naturali usu feminae, exarserunt in desideriis suis invicem, masculi in masculos turpitudinem operantes, et mercedem quam oportuit erroris sui in semet ipsis recipientes*). We shall remark, apropos of this celebrated passage from the Apostle, that this recompense, or rather

\**Translator's Note*:—The fibula was a needle drawn through the prepuce to prevent copulation.

this chastisement, which the guilty received into themselves could not have been anything else than one of those frightful maladies of the anus, which were so common among the *paedicones* and the *cinaedi* of Rome. Finally, the obscene *fascina*, which were made and sold in the perfumers' quarter, in the barber-shops and the houses of old courtezans, were sometimes put into service to sharpen the slothful senses of aged debauchees; we do not feel that we have the courage to translate this text of Petronius, even in disguising it: *Profert Enothea scortum fascinum, quod uo oleo et minuto atque uticae trito circumdedit semine, paulatim coepit inserere ano meo*.\* How had libertinism come to conceive this irritating mixture of pepper and nettle-seed, reduced to a powder and diluted with olive oil? We can imagine all the organic disorders which might result from this infernal instrument, and which were, undoubtedly, a part of that recompense which the guilty received into themselves, according to St. Paul.

It is permissible to suppose that the *sagae* and the perfumers took upon themselves certain operations, equally shameful in character and purpose, although an attempt had been made to have them authorized by medicine and performed by physicians: namely, the castration of women and the infibulation of the two sexes. "A number of surgeons," says Celsus, "are in the habit of submitting their young patients to infibulation, and this in the interest of their voices or their health. This operation is carried out thus: the prepuce is drawn forward and, after the opposite points where it is desired to make an incision have been marked in ink, the teguments are allowed to fall back upon themselves. The prepuce is then pierced, at the point designated, with a needle containing a thread, with two knotted ends, which is moved each day until the wound has been well healed over. When this result has been obtained, the thread is replaced by a buckle, the lighter the better. Nevertheless, this operation is more often futile than necessary. (*Sed hoc quidem saepius inter super vacua, quam inter necessari est.*)" Celsus does not dare protest against this detestable invention, which the most scandalous jealousy had caused to be adopted under pretext of preserving the voices of these young slaves at the age of puberty, and sometimes, for the purpose of preserving them from the bad habit

\**Translator's Note*.—The author's comment renders the quoted passage sufficiently clear.

of nocturnal pollutions. This buckle (*fibula*) which prevented the patient from committing the act of virility, was of gold or silver, sometimes soldered in the fire, sometimes fastened by a spring. What establishes the true purpose of these *fibulae* is the fact that they were equally adapted for the anus, by means of an operation analogous to the one which Celsus describes. As to the infibulation of women, which was modified in the Middle Ages through the invention of chastity-clasps, it was practiced in very nearly the same manner as that of men, and the ring or *fibula*, which held the sexual parts half closed, traversed the extremity of the great lips and was only opened with the aid of a key. Nothing was more common than the infibulation of slaves of masculine sex; but for slaves of the other sex, use was made by preference of a particular vestment, called *subligar* or *subligaculum*, which was laced in the rear, and which constituted a sort of protecting shield for those enclosed in this girdle of leather or padded horsehair. An ancient custom demanded that actresses should not appear upon the stage, out of respect for the modesty of the spectators, without being clad in drawers which obviated all accident and assured a proper respect to the matrons present: *Scenicorum mos quidem tantam habet*, we read in the treatise, *De Officiis, vetere disciplina verecundiam, ut in scenam sine subligaculo prodeat nemo*. An epigram of Martial informs us that respectable women prided themselves on their precaution in wearing the *subligar* everywhere: "Public rumor has it, Chione, that you have never known a man, and that nothing is purer than your virginity. And yet, you hide it more than you should when you bathe. If you are so modest, transfer the *subligar* to your face!" Martial speaks elsewhere of a black leather girdle, which male slaves attached about their loins when they accompanied their master or mistress to the baths, (*inguina succinctus nigra tibi servus alutá stat*); but in another epigram, he shows us an infibulated slave bathing with his mistress: "His member covered with a blade of grass, a slave bathes with you, Coelia. Why that, I ask you, since this slave is neither a *citharoedus* nor a singer? Undoubtedly, you do not wish to see what he is like? Then, why bathe in the sight of everyone? Are we, then, all eunuchs for you? Do not be jealous of your slave, Coelia; remove his *fibula*."

Finally, as we have said, it was in the shops where spells were sold that the castration of women was practiced. We have no precise

information as to the manner of this castration, which had for object the sterilization of the unfortunate ones who were mutilated by it. This cruel and futile operation, which was first practiced by the Lydians, if we are to believe the historian, Xanthus of Lydia, has even been looked upon as a fable. According to an ancient scholiast, the operation consisted in removing the small glands situated at the entrance of the neck of the matrix, glands which the ancients looked upon as testicles necessary to generation. Sometimes, the cutting away of these glands was replaced by compressing them with a finger. The girls who submitted to this barbaric treatment, as though they were chickens being fattened for the table, (*simili modo*, says Pier-rugues, *Itali et Gallo-provinciales gallinas eunuthant*) saw themselves, thus, deprived forever of the joys of maternity, but, on the other hand, they became more apt in the labors of Venus through their ignorance of those of Juno. Moreover, this species of castration was not very frequent, except for those girls destined for Prostitution in the lupanars, who, it was believed, were thus protected from pregnancies and abortions. We have read, nevertheless, on the subject of this mysterious operation which women of pleasure had to undergo in their infancy, we have read, in a learned rhetorician of the sixteenth century, that this operation, practiced on chosen subjects, by reason of their special conformation, completely altered the sex of the victims and caused to project from the organ those parts which are ordinarily enclosed, in such a manner that this female eunuch (*eunuchata*) had the appearance, if not the sex, of a man. The castration of men and children was less complicated and infinitely more widespread; it was even abused, until Domitian was obliged to forbid it, except in certain privileged cases. It was not physicians, especially physicians of renown, who performed these hideous mutilations which cupidity and debauchery had popularized; it was the barbers, it was the bathhouse-keepers, it was, more especially, the *sagae* and their horrible following who labored in behalf of the slave-merchants, the keepers of lupanars and the lenons. There was need of such a quantity of eunuchs at Rome in order to satisfy the demands of fashion and of libertinism that certain infamous *lenae* engaged in no other industry than that of stealing children to make of them *castrati*, *spadones*, or *thlibiae*.\* “Domitian,” says Martial, “does not stand for such horrors; he forbids the

\**Translator's Note*.—Term applied to those who had been castrated by compression.



merciless libertines to make a race of sterile men (*ne faceret steriles saeva libido viros*).” The odious instigators of these crimes and their accomplices were condemned to the mines, to exile and often to death.

But, the strange thing is, superstition remained in possession of the atrocious privilege which the imperial edict had denied to slave-vendors and the agents of debauchery; the priests of Cybele continued not only to mutilate themselves with potsherds, but they also practiced the same violence on the unfortunate children who fell into their hands. These *galli*,\* the majority of them vile debauchees and the hopeless victims of shameful maladies, were called *semiviri*,\*\* and pretended to sacrifice to the goddess the gangrenous remains of their absent virility. When they had nothing left to offer Cybele, they would go to seek obscene offerings by seizing upon the first comers who would yield themselves without resistance to their knives. Martial has put into verse an adventure which happened in his day, and which bears witness to the baleful superstition of the *galli*. We shall borrow this translation from the great collection of Latin authors published by M. Désiré Nisard, professor at the *Ecole Normale*: “When Misitius reached the territory of Ravenna, his native country, he met with a troop of those men, who are half-men, the priests of Cybele. He had for traveling companion the young Achilles, a fugitive slave of the most attractive beauty and gentleness. The castrates informed themselves of the place where he slept; but suspecting some ruse, the youth replied with a lie. They believed him, and each one went to sleep, after they had drunk. Then the wicked band, seizing an iron, mutilated the old man who was sleeping on the front of the couch, while the young lad, hidden at the rear, was sheltered from their attacks.” These abominable priests of Cybele took part in all the infamies of the Tuscan town; all trades were good to them, and, always under the influence of wine, always half mad, always obscene, they appear to have made a cult of the filthiest sort of debauchery, and to have aimed at replacing the Prostitution of women with that of eunuchs. It is thus

\**Translator’s Note*.:—The waters of the Gallus (*Gallos*) in Phrygia, the home of enchantments, were supposed to confer madness; and the name (*Galli*) had been applied to the priests of Cybele on account of their ravings. The word here has no connection with *gallus*, a cock.

\*\**Translator’s Note*.:—“Half-men.”

that Juvenal pictures for us the lordly *spado* (*semivir*), entering the house of a matron at the head of a fanatic train of *galli*, armed with drums and trumpets. This personage, whose venerable countenance bore the marks of his depravity (*obsceno facies reverenda minori*), and who, a long time before, had cut away with a potsherd the half of his genital parts, wore the Phrygian tiara of the courtezans and prided himself upon rivalling the latter by serving at once the pleasures of both sexes.

The *sagae*, the magicians, the poisoners, and all the feminine auxiliaries to Roman debauchery, were less blameworthy and less odious than these hermaphroditic priests who were a disgrace to the pagan religion.

## CHAPTER XXII

WE CANNOT form an exact and complete idea of what debauchery in Roman society was like if we avert our gaze from those lubricious scenes which are depicted with a sort of naïveté by the author of the *Satyricon*. Petronius has portrayed faithfully what took place every day, almost publicly, in the capital of the Empire, although, in order to make his allusions seem more distant, he has chosen Naples for the scene of his strange and picturesque romance, devoted to the history of debauchery and Prostitution under the reign of Nero. Petronius was a fine voluptuary, an excellent judge, (whence his nickname, *Arbiter*), in the matter of pleasure; he relates, in a flowery and figurative style, the most enormous debaucheries; and we are to believe that he wrote in accordance with his impressions and personal memories. It will suffice, then, to take all the pictures, all the information, all the mysteries of the cult of libertinism which are to be found accumulated in the fragments of this erotic and sodatic composition, and we shall have a faithful close-up picture of the private life of young Romans. The practical philosophy of these indefatigable debauchees, was summed up in this sentence of the *Cena Trimalchionis*: *Vivamus, dum licet esse!* That is to say: "Let us lead a joyous life so long as it is given us to live!" The verb *vivere* had taken on a signification much broader and less specialized than when it applied merely to the fact of material existence, and when it had not yet come to be applied to one manner of life rather than to another. The *delicati* of Rome had no difficulty in persuading themselves that to live without pleasure was not to live at all, and to enjoy oneself always was really to live, *vivere*. The women of easy manners, in whose company they spent their lives, were able to understand in no other fashion the meaning of this verb, which philologists themselves took at its new acceptance. It was in this sense that Varro employed *vivere* when he said: "Hasten to live, young woman, you whom adolescence permits to take pleasure, to eat, to love and to ride in the chariot of Venus (*Venerisque tenere bigas*)." To establish still better this nice expansion of the sense of *vivere*, a voluptuary of the school of Petronius wrote upon the tomb of a companion in pleasure: *Dum vivimus vivamus*, which it is almost

impossible to translate: "So long as we live, let us enjoy life."† Moreover, this life of perpetual pleasure had become so general among the patrician youth that it was deemed necessary to assign them a special goddess to protect them. This goddess, if we go back to Festus' etymology, derived her name, *Vitula*, from the word *vita*, or the joyous life over which she was to preside. *Vitula* had undoubtedly no other cult than that which was paid to her before the altar of the domestic gods, in the *cubiculum* (bedroom) or in the *triclinium* (dining-room), where one had most occasion to invoke her. Thanks to this goddess, one soon came to say *vitulare* in place of *vivere*, and we are inclined to suppose that *vitulare* signified to live couched at table or in a bed, as idly as a heifer (*vitula*) amid the grass of the field.

The voluptuaries, as a matter of fact, spent their lives in no other manner than this. "He gave the day to sleeping," says Tacitus, in speaking of Petronius, the most celebrated example of his species, "he gave the night to the duties of society and to pleasure. He won for himself a reputation by his idleness as others do by force of toil. In the opinion of all the dissipated ones who won renown for disorderly living and debauchery, Petronius was esteemed the most clever voluptuary." We are astonished that a few energetic characters were able to carry on business, studies and politics along with those incessant pleasures which consumed their lives. What freedom of mind and action could men have had who slept by day and who at night exhausted themselves in terrifying orgies? Those night festivals, those suppers, which were prolonged till sunrise, and which gave rise to the most monstrous excesses, were termed *comessationes* or *comissationes*.\* This word, essentially Latin, which does not derive from the Greek *komein*, to nourish,\*\* nor from *kome*, the hair, nor from *komide*, nourishment,\*\*\* etc., had been formed from *comes* and properly implied *companionship*, a gathering of friends and good companions. We should blush to advance the opinion here, although with much probability, that this hybrid word, always taken in bad part, was the source of the word *missa*, the mass, for the reason that

† *Translator's Note*:—Simply! "Let us live while we live."

\* *Translator's Note*:—The latter is the preferred form.

\*\* *Translator's Note*:—The verb signifies *to take care of, to attend to, to tend*.

\*\*\* *Translator's Note*:—The meaning is *attendance, attention, care*.—Cf. *comissatio* and the Greek *comos*, revel, carousal, merry-making—see Lacroix' own statement, further on.



the first Christians assembled by night, in secret places, to celebrate the sacred mysteries of their cult and to approach the holy table in communion. It is certain that the profane *comissationes*, which took place at night, and at which use was made of all the means of pleasure, all the forms of enjoyment, all the experiments of lust,—it is certain that these revelries amply merited the horror which they inspired in wise men and in the mothers of families. These were not only succulent and copious feasts, at which one gorged oneself with viands and with wine, where one did not cease eating and drinking till one had fallen dead drunk; they were, too often, the scene of a frightful debauchery. One could not enumerate, without disgust and stupefaction, all that took place during the long nocturnal hours of the banquet, amid musical concerts, lascivious songs, obscene dances, immodest remarks and indecent cries and laughter. Suetonius, Tacitus and the authors of the *Life of Augustus*, are constantly dramatizing the infamies which occurred at these feasts in the palace of the Caesars. Cicero, in his plea for Caelius, puts adulteries and such revels as these on the same footing (*libidines, amores, adulteria, convivias, comissationes*). A respectable man might forget himself, sometimes, in an orgy of this sort, but he did not boast of having taken part in it and he would often blush at having been the spectator, and upon occasion the accomplice, of these outbursts.

This fashion was contemporary with the invasion of Rome by Asiatic lust; it began when Rome, like the degenerate peoples of the Orient, began lying back on cushions and couches to take her meals. Up to that time, everyone had eaten seated upright, and even the chair on which one sat was not too soft; the women themselves sat on wooden benches or tripods. "They are called chairs (*sedes dictae*)," says Isadore in his *Etymologies*, "because among the ancient Romans the custom was not to eat reclining but to sit at table; but soon the men began to recline upon couches before the tables," while the women alone remained seated, which caused Valerius Maximus to remark: "Austere manners are observed by the present generation more scrupulously in the Capitolium, at the sacred repasts given in honor of Jupiter, than in the interior of their homes." Women permitting themselves to imitate the men by reclining at table committed an act of immodesty and indicated thereby that they would not stop with this slight to the conventions. At the joyous supper at which Cicero did not disdain to take his place beside

the Greek courtesan, Clytheris, that beautiful *preciosa* indulged in no affectation about reclining on an ivory couch, making no pretense to the grave and decent decorum of a matron, who would have remained seated, and who would not have dared even to recline upon her elbow. Plautus shows us, also, other courtesans, Bacchides and her sisters, occupying a single couch at table; sometimes a single couch received guests of different sex, and in this case, they were placed sometimes one opposite another, sometimes one above another, in such a manner that one had his head resting on the breast of the other;\* sometimes they were stretched out face to face, so close to each other that they might have eaten from the same plate. One sees, thus, the lover and his mistress, the effeminate and his master, supping side by side and disputing the morsels of food even on each other's lips. Sometimes, also, the woman or the adolescent was crouched behind the man, who occupied the front of the couch and who saw to it that food or wine was passed back in abundance to his male or female companion; the latter, male or female, who had dishonored himself or herself by accepting part of a festal couch, would take, then, a place at the further end or in the middle of this couch, which was piled high with soft cushions; and this was what was known as *accumbere interior*, that is to say, reclining "on the inside" of the couch. A few scholiasts, however, have thought that we ought to read *inferior*, and that this word had allusion to the lower position which the courtesan or the *cinaedus* took in reclining his or her head upon the breast of a lover (*in gremio amatoris*): "He who every day perfumes himself and prinks himself in front of a mirror," bitterly exclaimed Scipio Africanus to Sulpitius Gallus, one day, in reproaching the latter for the effeminacy of his manners, "he who shaves his eyebrows, who pulls out the hair from his beard, who depilates his thighs; who, in his youth, clad in a long-sleeved tunic, occupies at the feast the same couch with his corrupter, he who loves not only wine but also boys—can one doubt that such a man does all that the *cinaedi* are in the habit of doing?" Aulus Gallius, who reports these words of Scipio Africanus, informs us that the Syrian tunic, *chiridotae*, the sleeves of which covered all the arms and fell down over the hand to the tips of the fingers, was the ordinary garment of effeminates at the *comissationes*, where the latter absolutely abandoned all the characteristics of their sex.

\*Translator's Note:—Termed "*In sinu accumbere*."

One must read, in Petronius, the description of Trimalchio's dinner in order to be able to picture the numerous episodes of an orgy which lasted an entire night. They did not eat or drink without interruption; there were intermissions of various sorts: first, provocative conversations, obscene or voluptuous; then, music, song, dancing and divertissements of every sort; and, after or during these intermissions, all the disorderly carryings-on that drunkenness or lust might suggest. They soon grew tired of actors (*mimi*) who staged pantomimes or recited verses; of buffoons and *aretalogi* who held forth on comic subjects;\* they would listen no longer, except distractedly; and eyes, clouded by the fumes of Bacchus, would begin to droop. But suddenly, mountebanks and female dancers would appear to revive the attention of the fatigued guests by awakening their senses. These dancers, the majority of them from Asia or Egypt, were women who had brought from India a very old tradition of debauchery; they would present themselves nude, or covered merely with gilded or silver veils, a diaphanous covering for their nudity; it is this which Petronius calls being clad in a tissue of air (*indure ventum textilem*) and showing oneself nude in clouds of linen (*prostare nudam in nebula linea*). Mountebanks were clad no more decently, and displayed their naked limbs, massaged with scented oil and laden with rings and jeweled bells. These mountebanks would act pantomimes, do perilous somersaults, make grimaces and indulge in extraordinary *tours de force*; they never forgot, in their poses, to cause all the contours, all the muscles of their body to stand out; they accompanied their movements with the most indecent gestures; they gave to their mouths an obscene expression, which they supplemented with a rapid play of their fingers (*micatio digitorum*) in the manner of the Etruscans; they exchanged, thus, mute signs, which always had some more or less direct connection with the shameful act (*turpitudine*); and sometimes, inflamed with lust and excited by the applause of the guests, they would pass from gestures to actions and indulge in obscene combats, imitating the depravities of those Fauns which are to be viewed on the painted vases of Etruria. As for the female dancers, they performed turns which a Father of the Christian Church, Arnobius, has described in his book against the Gentiles: "A lubricious troop performed dissolute dances, leapt

\**Translator's Note*.—The *aretalogi* (literally, *babblers about virtue*) were philosophic monologists or clowns.

in disorder and sang, whirling while they danced, and, in keeping with the music, lifting up their thighs and their loins, they would give to the *nates*, in the lumbar region, a rotary motion which would have proved too much for the most frigid spectator." The Jesuit, Boulanger, does not hesitate to assert that this obscene shaking and these undulations of the loins communicated to all the guests an amorous itching (*modo nudae, et fluctuantibus lumbis obsceno motu, pruriginem spectantibus conciliabant*).

Martial has left us a sketch of the revels of the libertine whom he calls Zoilus; and this sketch, although considerably weakened in the classical translation which has recently been published by M. Désiré Nisard, is still more Latin than all the other descriptions from which we might be able to compile a fanciful picture: "Whoever would be Zoilus' guest must also sup with the *meretrices* of the Summoenium,\* and drink nonchalantly from Leda's notched bidet. I even assume that, with them, this is looked upon as more proper and more decent. Clad in a green robe, he is stretched out on the couch which he has been the first to take; he piles up the cushions of scarlet silk, and elbows to the right and to the left his neighbors at table. As soon as he has taken his place, one of his boys, warned by his hiccoughs, presents him with rose-colored shells and lentisk tooth-picks. If he is warm, a concubine, reclining at ease on her back, refreshes him gently with the aid of a green fan, while a young slave chases the flies away with a branch of myrtle. A masseuse (*tractatrix*) rapidly passes her hand over his body and artfully rubs each of his members. When he claps his hand, a eunuch, who recognizes this signal, and who is adept at provoking the emission of urine, guides the drunken *mentula* of his master, who does not cease his drinking (*domini bibentis ebrium regit penem*). The latter, moreover, bending toward the group of slaves ranged at his feet, among the little bitches who are licking the entrails of a goose, shares among his valets of the palaestra the kidneys of a wild boar and gives to his bed-companion (*concubino*) the rump of a turtledove. And while they pour for us wine from the hills of Liguria, or from the smoky mountain of Mas-salia, he distributes to his buffoons the nectar of Opimius, in crystal vials and in murrhine vases. He himself, all perfumed with the essences of Cosmus,\*\* does not blush to share with us, in a gold shell,

\*Translator's Note:—A prostitute district, probably near the walls.

\*\*Translator's Note:—A celebrated maker of ointments.



the pomade of which the prostitutes make use. Succumbing, finally, to his multiple libations, he falls asleep. As for us, we remain couched on our beds, and, having been ordered to keep silent while he snores away, we drink each other's health with signs." Petronius, in his *Cena Trimalchionis*, shows us another phase of the subject, the excesses which occurred among the women at these gatherings: "Fortunata, the wife of Trimalchio, came then, her robe caught back by a green girdle in such a manner as to reveal, above her cerise tunic, her gold-fringed garters and her gilded slippers. Her hands playing with the kerchief which she wore about her neck, she took her place on the couch with Habinnas' wife, Scintilla, who clapped her hands and whom she embraced. . . . These two women did nothing but laugh and mingle their drunken kisses, and Scintilla proclaimed her friend the housewife par excellence, while the other complained of her little ones and of her husband's lack of attention. While they were embracing in this manner, Habinnas rose up stealthily, seized Fortunata by the feet, which she held out in front of her, and pulled her head over heels off the couch (*pedesque Fortunatae porrectos super lectum immisit*). 'Ha, ha!' she cried, feeling her tunic slipping over her knees; and readjusting it as quickly as possible, she hid in Scintilla's breast a face rendered still more indecent by its blushes."

The *comissationes* assumed the most varied character, depending upon the imagination of the debauchee who was giving the party, and reflecting more or less the tastes and habits of the master of the place. But the object, always, was to excite the senses to the highest possible degree, and to lead the guests on to unbelieved excesses. Thus, sometimes, the table service was a brazen provocation to an act of nature, and wherever the eyes rested they encountered nothing but voluptuously obscene images. The walls were covered with paintings, in which the artist had reproduced, without veils, all the inventions of venereal genius. "The man whose hand first painted such obscene pictures," cries the tender Propertius, "and he who first suspended those shameful images in a respectable house, corrupted thereby the innocent gaze of youth, and must have desired to prevent youth from remaining a novice in those excesses to which it was thus introduced; let him forswear his art forever, the painter who first reproduced for our gaze those amorous contests, the mystery of which is all their charm!" These paintings evoked by preference

the most monstrous scenes of mythology: Pasiphaë and the bull, Leda and the swan, Ganymede and the eagle, Glaucus and the mares, Danaë and the rain of gold. In treating these sacred subjects, the artist had sought to translate, under the names of gods and goddesses, the gross and material sensations which it had been the pleasure of the poets of love to describe. It was, ordinarily, the infamous poem of Elephantis which furnished the postures and the colors for these mythologic episodes. The furnishings of the hall and its decoration were often in harmony with the paintings; dances of satyrs, bacchanalia, erotic shepherd scenes ran in bas-relief around the cornices; statues in bronze and marble represented satyrs at grips with nymphs, those eternal victims of the demi-gods of the woods; the couches, the tables, the chairs, had goat's feet and goat's heads for ornaments, as though by allusion to the famous verses in the bucolics of Virgil: *tuentibus hircis*. A lamp suspended from the ceiling, the candelabra resting upon the supper table, recalled by some ithyphallic form, often pleasing and ingenious, the principal object of the gathering. Here was a Love riding horseback (*equitans*) on an enormous phallus, provided with wings and feet; there were birds or turtledoves picking away at the priapus; again, a garland formed of the attributes of the god of generation; again, animals, plants, insects, butterflies, all sharing the same hieratic form. As to the goblets, the amphorae, the utensils of the table, whether they were in glass, in terra cotta or in metal, they wore, so to speak, the same general livery, and they approached more or less closely in their configuration the indecent emblem which presided over the feast. That is why Juvenal shows us a *comissator* drinking from a glass priapus (*vitreo bibit ille priapo*). This is what Pliny gravely alludes to as obscene drinking, *biber per obscenitates*. The bread which was consumed at these libidinous meals was no more decent than the drinking vases: the *coliphia* and the *cunni siliginei*, made of pure wheat flour, succeeded each other in the mouths of the guests, who soon no longer had a thought that was foreign to the god of the occasion: "You know," the host might have remarked, making use of the words of Petronius' Quartilla, "you know that the whole night belongs to the cult of Priapus." (*Sciatis Priapi genio pervigilium deberi*).

In this cult were included the erotic healths which each one drank in his turn in the course of these interminable orgies. They drank almost always to the happy success in amours and to the great ex-

plots of lovers. They emptied as many beakers as there were letters in the name of the loved person. Martial speaks of this general custom in one of his most charming epigrams: "Drink five beakers to Nedia, seven to Justine, five to Lycas, four to Lyde, three to Ida; toss off the Falernian as many times as there are letters in the name of each of these ladies. But since none of them comes, do you come to me, Sleep." A buffoon of the table, the famous Galba, who took upon himself the task of enlivening all the suppers to which he was invited, proposed a health to his boy, whose name, he said, was enough to intoxicate the gods of Olympus; in short, it was necessary to drink twenty-seven times in succession, for he had given to this favored slave the celebrated name coined by Plautus to describe a miser: *Thesaurοchrysonicochrysidēs*. We cannot say whether or not it was at this same supper that Galba gave proof, at once, of a remarkable presence of mind and of a remarkable cynicism. He had been invited there with his wife, who was very beautiful and of very easy-going manners. The master of the house had placed the lady next himself, and at the end of the repast, when all the guests had fallen asleep under the heavy poppies of Bacchus, he drew near the sleeping lady and did all that was necessary to wake her. She did not awake, however, but gave herself without resistance. Scurra\* was not asleep, although he appeared to be, but was leaving the field free to his Maecenas, when a slave, deceived by this simulated slumber drew near Galba's couch and began to drink out of his glass. "I do not sleep for everyone!" exclaimed the buffoon, seizing the knave by the ear. In these nocturnal orgies, everything served as a pretext for new healths and for new goblets of wine, which were often the echoes or the forerunners of amorous combats of the morrow or of the night before. The number of these combats was reckoned by the number of wreaths of flowers which were placed before a statuette of Hercules, of Priapus or of Venus. These wreaths played a great part in all the circumstances in which drunkenness, vinous and sensual, found need at once of a stimulus and of a preservative. The scent of flowers tempered the fumes of the grape, and, at the same time, exalted the sense of pleasure. Pliny assures us that the great drinkers, in wreathing themselves with odorous flowers, thereby warded off giddiness and headaches. There was, therefore, no orgy without wreaths for the head, without flowers strewing the

\*Translator's Note:—Generic name for jester.

table and the floor. One judged from the beauty and the abundance of these wreaths of the liberality and the good taste of the *comissator*. The day following a supper, the courtezans and the children (*meritorii*) who had been present would send their wreaths trampled and broken, to their lenons as an evidence that they had done their duty (*in signum paratae Veneris*, says an old commentator of Apuleius).

These *comissiones* and the shameful acts to which they gave rise, took place under the auspices of certain gods and certain goddesses, who had been turned for this purpose from their decent attributes, or who had been born in an orgy of religious imagination. At Trimalchio's dinner, two slaves, clad in white tunics, entered the dining hall and placed upon the table the lares of the place, while a third slave, holding a pitcher of wine, made a tour of the table crying: "May our gods be propitious." These gods were called Industry, Happiness and Profit. But Petronius passes over in silence the true divinities who presided at these nocturnal feasts, and who took part in them under different names. There was, first of all and above all, Comus, who found in part his name in the joyous *Comissiones* prepared and celebrated under his auspices; he was represented as young, his face illuminated, his forehead wreathed with roses. His name had been formed from the word *comes*,\* companion, from which sprang, naturally, the word, *commissari* to make good cheer among companions. The libertine youths, who went by night with torch and hatchets to break down the doors and break in the windows of courtezans, would invoke Comus and pride themselves upon being enrolled under his Bacchic banner; but this turbulent crowd, whom the aedile would condemn to a fine and even to the lash, found no excuse in the evil reputation of the god whom they had taken for their chief. Venus, Hercules, Priapus, Isis, Hebe and Cupid were also the tutelary gods of these feasts. Cupid, who differed from Love, the son of Venus and of Mars; Cupid, whom Saint Augustine deifies under the title of *Deus copulationis*, was the son of Chaos and of the Earth according to Hesiod; of Venus and of the Heavens, according to Sappho; of the Night and the Ether, according to Archesilaus; of Discord and of Zephyr, according to Alceus; he reigned, above all, at the end of suppers; Hebe, who poured nectar and immortality

\*Translator's Note:—Comus is the Greek *Komos*, which is hardly to be derived from the Latin *comes*! *Komos* is from *Komazein*, to revel.



for the guests of Olympus, had to display some indulgence for mortals gathered at table. Isis, whom the impious had nicknamed the tutelary goddess (*præfecta*) of prostitutes and of lenons, was looked upon as the best counselor among the gods of love. Venus, Priapus and Hercules aided Isis in the protection which she gave to lovers. There was *Venus Volupia*, *Pandemos* and *Lubentia*; there was Hercules, *Bibax*, *Buphagus*, *Pamphagus* and *Rusticus*; there was Priapus, the god of Lampsacum, and Panthius, the soul of the universe.

In addition to these great gods, who possessed each his own proper place in the Pantheon of Paganism, and who only presided over feasts as a matter of courtesy, so to speak, there was a horde of obscure little gods who had no place in the sun, and who would not have dared to appear elsewhere than on the altar of the lares of the place. These gods often owed their fugitive existence only to a drunken whim, or to a lover's fancy. As to their appearance, it was dictated by the good pleasure of the inventor, who drew upon his own ideas for the physiognomy and the attributes of these little divinities, the majority of them grotesque, ridiculous and hideous of aspect. Immense archeologic researches would be required to reconstruct the theogony of the lares of debauchery. The first to attract our attention is Conisalus, of Athenian origin, a diminutive of Priapus, who presided over the perspiration (*Konîsalos*) provoked by amorous contests. He was represented under the form of a phallus, mounted on the feet of a goat and having the head of a horned Faun. The god Tryphallus, to whom one prayed in difficult enterprises, was but a little bit of a man who bore a *membrum virile* as tall as his hat and who carried himself as upright as a spear. Pilmnus and Picumnus, the guardian deities of women in childbirth, were singularly equipped by nature. The first, whose name was derived from *pilum*, a pile, according to St. Augustine, personified a certain obscenity; Picumnus, brother of the foregoing, had the name and face of a green woodpecker, a bird with a long beak which makes holes in the trunks of trees in order to build its nest there. Three goddesses of very low rank, Deverra, Deveronna and Intercidona, to whom pregnant women also commended themselves, were not indifferent to the mysteries of love: Intercidona held a hatchet; Deverra held wands; Deveronna held a broom. Viriplaca, goddess of conjugal accommodations, had appeared so useful to the Romans that they had accorded her the honor of a chapel at Rome, but she was worshiped, above

all, in the interior of the home, and it was in front of her statue that the quarrels of wedded pairs and lovers were ended, without their needing to go to the Palatine Hill in order to seek the aid of that conciliatory goddess. We are in utter ignorance as to what was this goddess' allegoric countenance. The god Domiducus, who accompanied brides to the home of their bridegrooms, performed the same service for mistresses and for effeminates. It is likely that we must recognize this accommodating god in a little bronze statuette which represents a villager clad in a cape with a hood, under which his head is entirely hidden; when this removable cape is raised, it affords a view of a Priapus with human legs. The goddess Suadela, whose mission it was to persuade; the goddess Orbana who had orphans under her care; the goddess Genita-Mana, whose duty it was to prevent children from being deformed and misshapen; the goddesses, Postversa and Prorsa, who watched over the position of the foetus in the belly of the mother; the goddess Cuba-Dea, who was interested in anyone in childbed; the god Thalassus or Thalassio, who had jurisdiction over the bed and all that concerned it; and a host of other gods and goddesses also received offerings and invocations, when the voluptuaries believed that they had need of more than mortal aid. Angerona, placed by the side of Venus Volupia, prescribed silence by placing her finger on her mouth; and Fauna, the favorite goddess of matrons, was there to cover with a discreet veil all that was not to be seen by the profane. Finally, if there had been a union of the two sexes and an accomplishment of natural laws, one poured wine on the obscene face of the god Jugatinus: "*Quum mas et foemina conjunguntur,*" says Flavius Blondus in his book, *Rome Triumphant*, "*adhibetur deus Jugatinus.*" St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, limits the attributes of Jugatinus to assisting bridal couples in the duties of marriage.

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE Roman people were the most superstitious of all peoples, and with them, the most superstitious of all were the men and women who, by taste, from habit or by profession, had enfeebled body and soul in the arts of debauchery (*stupri artes*) and in erratic manners of all sorts. We may understand that the fear of the gods and preoccupation with the future occasionally disturbed, in the midst of their orgies, these libertines, whose consciences were awakened but seldom, and then as though by chance; we may understand that these mercenary beings who shamefully trafficked in themselves, and who expected from this horrible traffic their daily lucre, would naturally be anxious to know whether the day or night were going to be propitious, and if their fate were going to send them some favorable chance. As to lovers, they constantly had need of foresight in the vast domain of their cares and hopes; they forged for themselves a myriad chimaeras, and they had need at every moment of creating a security or yielding to an anxiety equally factitious, by way of satisfying the fixed idea which was tormenting them. Hence, their continual observation of signs, that constant search for the means of knowing and directing destiny, that fanatic passion for all the occult and shady sciences. What might be termed the world of love at Rome had but one religion, which consisted of the most credulous and active superstition; but this superstition, in this world of sensual pleasures and nameless excesses, presented characteristics quite different from those of superstition in general, which did not make use of auspices, horoscopes, fates and evil spells for the sake of love and debauchery. All the Romans, from children to old men, the women as well as the men, the wisest as well as the simplest, were equally sensitive to omens and equally guided by signs, good or bad, in the least actions of their lives. And those persons who made of sensual pleasure their chief business in life were still more susceptible in the face of these pretended warnings of destiny. The knowledge and interpretation of omens constituted a veritable art, one that had its names and its principles; it was called *cleronistica*; and in this science, full of imperceptible shadings, the chapter on love was longer and more detailed than all the others.

It was an evil omen to utter or to listen to obscene words; that is why these words were banished even from the gatherings of debauchees and prostitutes, in accordance with a proverb which is to be found in all ages and among all peoples: "To do is good, to say is bad." One had no need, therefore, to be scrupulous with regard to his actions; but one carefully avoided putting those actions into words; one did not describe them, one did not name them. Plautus says, in his comedy of the *Servant* (*Casina*); "To indulge in obscene speech is to bring evil on those who listen." (*Obscenare, omen alicui vituperare*). Lucius Accius had said also, in his tragedy, the *Oenomaus*: "Go into the fields and publish it through the town, with the greatest care, that all the citizens who dwell in the citadel, in order to win the favor of the gods by means of happy omens, must put out of their mouths every obscene word (*ore obscena segregent*)." It is, then, quite certain that the vilest prostitutes, the most infamous *mascarpiones*,\* the most brazen libertines would abstain from oral obscenities; but they made themselves understood by means of those gestures which were so eloquent at Rome, and which composed so rich a silent vocabulary. They had such a horror of obscene words, of expressions of evil augury, that they never pronounced the word *urinal* or *pot de chambre* (*vas urinarium*), while the physicians themselves employed a decent periphrasis in speaking of urine (*urina*), which, however, found its way into Martial's epigrams. At the *comissationes*, where the urinary vase played an obligatory rôle, the guests who made use of it at table and in the sight of all, demanded it of a slave by clapping the hands (*digiti crepitantis signa*). Sometimes one snapped a finger at the joint, when one did not wish to attract the attention of his neighbors, and when the slave could see the sign, which only produced a very slight noise. Then, in satisfying this natural need (*urinam solvere*, says Pliny), one took care to produce an omen through the noise the urine made in striking against the side of the vase; this omen might be interpreted in various manners. Juvenal pictures for us, with contempt, a rich gourmand who rejoiced at the resonance of a gold vase under the spray of his urine. The urinary vase is a thing which Plautus permits himself to mention frequently in his comedies, in order to make the Roman populace laugh; it was called *matula*, *matela* and *scaphium*. This last was a vase especially destined for women, who hid it from the eyes of their

\*Translator's Note:—*Mascarpio*: an onanist.



husbands and their lovers; there is a lack of agreement as to the form of the *scaphium*, which was, undoubtedly, often obscene and ithyphallic. As to the *matula*, it was an enormous metal basin, over the orifice of which one might sit. The *matela*, on the contrary, served only for portable uses and was but middling in capacity; a good drinker (*compotator*) would refill one a number of times in the course of a supper. The lexicographers make no distinction between these three sorts of vases, in giving one definition for all: "The vase in which we relieve the bladder is sometimes called *matela* and sometimes *scaphium*." The name of this vase was employed figuratively, with an obscene sense which, and this is the remarkable thing, has passed into all modern languages. Plautus has anticipated this obscenity, in his *Mostellaria*: "By Hercules! If you do not give me the pot, I shall make use of you (*tam Hercle! ego vos pro matula habebo, nisi matulam datis*)." Persius, by another allusion, also figuratively employs the word *matula* in the sense of *stupid*, for the reason that the *pot de chambre* receives everything and complains of nothing: *Numquam ego tam esse matulam credidi* ("I never thought that I also was a *pot de chambre*!" if we are to translate the phrase literally, in the spirit of our own language). As to the etymology of *matula*, it must, undoubtedly, be sought in *mentula*. The urine, which Seneca describes by respectable circumlocutions (*aqua im-munda, humor obscenus*), was, thus, material for auguries, according to whether it spurted forth quickly, intermittently, by threads, by jerks or in sheets. An abundant and easy evacuation of this *obscene liquid*, preceding a sacrifice to Venus, announced the happy outcome of this sacrifice, in the course of which the word *urina* took on a new sense, figurative and still more obscene. Juvenal is very near to giving it this sense, when he says that, at sight of the lascivious dancers of Spain, sensual pleasure insinuates itself through the eyes and ears and sets into ebullition the urine which fills the bladder: *Et mox auribus atque oculis concepta urina movetur*.

These urine-auguries took place especially at the *comissationes*, where might be heard, at every instant, the snapping of an impatient finger, and where they sometimes brought to the table a statuette of Hercules Urinator, in order to expand the loins and calm the kidneys of the guests. No less importance attached to the auguries of ructation, which we call a belch in trivial language, to which this unpleasing occurrence has been relegated. The Romans,

the great eaters especially, did not feel as we do on this subject. There were belches of good augury, which all the guests applauded; there were also those which were sufficient to cast a shadow over and disrupt a feast. It would be difficult today to define the belches of good and evil omen, but in any case, the *ructus* was not looked upon as a lack of good breeding. No constraint was imposed upon these noisy and disagreeable outbreaks of a stomach-storm, inasmuch as the Romans had apotheosized, under the name of *crepitus*, those vapors, those interior winds, which escaped with violence from the mouth or from the lower regions. Cicero, in his intimate *Letters*, does not hesitate to praise the wisdom of the Stoics, who asserted that the complaints of the belly and the stomach should not be overlooked (*stoici crepitus aiunt aequae liberos ac ructus esse oportere*). The ancients had, in this respect, different ideas from ours. They looked upon as good or evil the noises made by these belchings, and they drew from them corresponding auguries, with an imperturbable gravity. One must have been a Roman in order not to take flight at this verse from a comedy of Plautus: *Quid lubet? Pergin' ructare in os mihi?* "Is it your pleasure to continue to belch in my mouth!" The interlocutor responds to this vile remark: "To belch seems to me a very charming thing, now and always." (*Suavis ructus mihi est, sic et sine modo*). At the nocturnal feasts, the guests, laden with food and drink, wafted their belches from one to another, and a slave was on hand expressly for the purpose of noting the omens. Each *ructator* knew, at a given point, whether the Fates were favorable to him, and if he were to have any bad luck in his love-affairs. "There is, incessantly, an obliging one ready to cry marvel," says Juvenal, "if the Amphitryon has belched well (*si bene ructavit*), if he has urinated in a straightforward manner (*sic rectum minxit*), and if the gold basin has properly resounded in receiving his offering." There were, also, many other omens, generally propitious, accompanying the emission of a *flatus*, the nature of which was revealed by the sound or by the odor; not only was there no little mutual indulgence for these accidents, to the sound and odor of which all were accustomed, but there was even mutual applause for having placed no obstacle against the desires of nature and of that omnipotent god who was known as *Gaster*.\* Each time

\*Translator's Note:—In Rabelais' St. Victor's Library, cf. the facetious title, *Ars honesti petandi in societate*. (Book Second, Chapter VII.) Cf., also, Rabelais' *Gaster* (Book Fourth, Chapter LVII.).

that a *crepitus* was heard, those present would turn toward the south or the east, would puff out their cheeks, and would pretend to be whistling, pursing up their lips like a zephyr. It was only in the serious or religious assemblages that silence had to be imposed on one's rear and the gates of this indecent Aeolus had to be kept closed. But everywhere else, and especially at table, entire liberty and absolute indulgence reigned. "When we are in the dining-room, in the midst of slaves and servants," says Cato, "if anyone among us has burst forth under his tunic, he does me no wrong; if it happens that a slave or a servant permits himself to do during his sleep what one does not do in company, he does me no wrong." The little god Poop figured in all the *comissationes*, under the form of a crouching infant, who is pressing his sides, and who appears to be engaged in the performance of his divine functions. This god had been conceived by the Egyptians, who, it would seem, had need of frequently invoking him. "The Egyptians," says Clement of Alexandria, "look upon the noises of the belly as divinities" (*Aegyptos crepitus ventri pro numinibus habent*); but according to one commentator, reference here is, rather, to those rumblings of the intestines called *borborygmes*\* in technical language. St. Jerome is more explicit when he says that he will not speak of the poop which is a cult among the Egyptians (*taceam de crepitu ventris inflati, quae pelusiaca religio est*). St. Caesarius, in his *Dialogues*, even adds that this cult inspired a sort of fanaticism among the pagans who practiced it: *Nisi forte de ethnicis Aegyptiis loquamur, qui flatus ventris non sine furore quodam inter deos retulerunt*. Finally, Minucius Felix certainly does not intend a jest, when he makes the statement that the Egyptians are less afraid of Serapis than they are of the noises which come from the shameful parts of the body (*crepitus per pudenda corporis emissos*). Wholly Egyptian as he was, the god Poop had been naturalized among the Romans who gave him an honored place on the altars of their lares. They had even decreed him a chapel beyond the walls, near the source of the Egeria; but they worshiped him in public under the name of the god *Ridiculus*, and under the form of a little monster, represented in the posture best suited to his deeds and gestures. The omen lay in the sound of the poop (*peditum*, as Catullus calls it) rather than in its odor; for augury was associated by preference with sounds. It appeared, however, that women did not permit them-

\*Translator's Note:—The French word.

selves this sort of liberty, and that they declined to furnish omens of this sort; for Apuleius speaks of a fig from which the women abstain for the reason that it caused flatulence (*quia pedita excitat*). The women avoided, then, with precaution, listening to the spirits in their bellies, which sometimes broke down all barriers in the convulsions of pleasure, the omen becoming then more significant. When, by chance, the spirits had announced their pregnancy, the sound promised a male child, the odor a daughter. Such is, probably, the origin of that indecent epithet which was applied to girls in the popular language, in which they were known as *fizzles*.\* Moreover, the fizzle (*visium*) was never taken in as good part as the poop (*crepitus*) among the Romans. "The word *divisio* is respectable," says Cicero, "but it becomes obscene when one replies: *intercapedo*."\*\* These omens, for the impropriety of which credulity was no excuse, came directly from the Greeks; for Aristophanes introduces us, in his *Knights*, to a character who draws from a dream an equally indecent omen, and who thanks the gods for so favorable a one.

There were still other human noises which lent themselves to capricious interpretations; the sneeze, for example, was understood in many manners, according to whether it was resounding, plaintive, startling, farcical, simple or reiterative. To sneeze in the morning, to sneeze in the evening and to sneeze at night held three different meanings: Bad, good, excellent. It was still more significant if the sneeze came suddenly in the midst of the labors of Venus. The goddess proclaimed, thereby, her beneficent protection for the sneezer, who was thoughtful enough to turn to the right as he sneezed. The sneeze at a meal brought joy to the guests, who at once saluted and applauded the one whom the god had visited;\*\*\* for in accordance with an ancient belief, which reappears incessantly in the Greek writers, the sneeze was attributed to the invisible passings of a tutelary god; they had nicknamed this deity the bird of Jupiter, the preserver; Socrates said he was a demon, and the philosopher prided himself upon understanding the sternutatory language of this familiar

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. Rabelais, Book Second, Chapter LVII.

\*\*Translator's Note:—*Intercapedo*: literally, an interruption. "In the nominative singular," remarks Andrews (*Latin-English Lexicon*), "the word is said to have an obscene signification." In addition to the passage from Cicero, Andrews cites Quintilian, 8, 3, 46.—*Divisio*, in an obscene sense, meant a violation, a dishonoring.

\*\*\*Translator's Note:—Cf. the German *Gesundheit*, etc.



demon. The sneeze was not so good in women as in men; and the former feared it, moreover, to the point of having recourse, when they were subject to it, to certain preventive means. To sneeze three times in succession, or any odd number of times, was the best of omens. "May the gods grant that I sneeze seven times," said Opimius, "before entering the couch of my goddess!" The sneeze was always to be explained by supernatural causes; there was a desire to see, in this violent shaking-up of the animal spirits, the exit of some *genius* which had been working in the brain of the sneezer. Mythology relates that Pallas, born from Jupiter's forehead, had wished to be born under the favoring auspices of a sneezer. Mythology, always ingenious in its allegoric fables, supposed that Venus refrained from sneezing in order not to make wrinkles in her face. Jupiter and Cybele were, then, the deities who presided over sneezes, which were looked upon as favorable when they had been vented to the right with as much noise as possible. These sneezes were not an indifferent matter in love, and to them were attributed a host of happy prognostications. When Catullus shows us Acme and Septimius in each other's arms, vowing an eternal love: "Let us serve but one god," cries Acme deliriously, "if it is true that the fire which flows in my veins is more ardent than your own!" And the poet adds, "Love, which up to that time had sneezed to the left, showed his approbation by sneezing to the right (*amor, sinistram ut ante, dextram sternuit approbationem*)." Propertius could not better depict the benefits of such a sneeze than by inquiring if Love, on the day of Cynthia's birth, had sneezed in this manner over the fair one's cradle:

*Num tibi nascenti et primis, mea vita, diebus,  
Candidus argutnum sternuit omen Amor?\**

One in love was also very much preoccupied with the ringing of the ears, sudden jerkings of the body (*salisationes*) and the incongruous movements of any member. These omens, at least for the most part, were not fortunate; they were looked upon as indications of infidelity or of some other offense that was an outrage to love. Pliny was not so credulous as his contemporaries; he affirmed, how-

*\*Translator's Note:*—"Can it be, light of my life, that, at your birth and in your infancy, radiant Love sneezed for you a clearly favorable omen?"

ever, that the ringing of the ears was the echo of a conversation which the absent were holding.\* The jealous, especially, had faith in these presentiments; and a lover whose ears rang did not doubt that the virtue of his mistress was at stake. It was also, sometimes, a symptom of love, which spoke and answered itself, as in these verses, attributed to Catullus:

*Garrula quid totis resonans mihi noctibus auris  
Nescio quem dicis nunc meminisse mei?\*\*\**

One sought, always, a supernatural effect for a purely physical cause. A ringing of the ears was enough to disturb the tête-a-tête of lovers, to prevent their meeting, and to cause coldness to succeed the liveliest passion. The ringing of the ears provoked quarrels and was a forerunner of misfortunes, tears, a break or a treason. There were, in the same manner, certain nervous vibrations which made themselves felt in the members: á vibrations of the hand, of the foot, of the organs of generation and of the whole body held, each, a special omen, more or less unfavorable. After a trembling of this sort, the one who had experienced it remained frigid and impotent in the presence of the most beautiful Greek courtesan, in the presence of the most tantalizing *cinaedus*. Physiological phenomena were always most oppressing when they effected the left side of the body. There were, also, many strange omens which accompanied the inspection of the shameful parts and which were consulted, ordinarily, upon leaving the bath; but these are not to be rendered into French; we are forced to leave them under the veil of the Latin: *Mentula torta, bonum omen; infaustam, si pendula, etc.\*\*\**

In addition to the sounds of the human body, interest was manifested in all external noises, in a propitious sense, or otherwise; these noises were of various kinds according to the persons concerned. Thus, the one to which the friends and agents of sensual pleasure attached the most importance was, of necessity, the creaking of the

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. our burning of the ears.

\*\*Translator's Note:—"Prattling ear of mine, ringing all night long, whoever, do you mean to tell me, is now thinking of me?"

\*\*\*Translator's Note:—In other words, a state of sexual excitation in the male was a favorable, the reverse state an unfavorable omen.

bed (*argutio lecti*). In the various murmurs of this piece of furniture were heard cries, complaints or groans, like a soul in pain; there was, here, a mysterious language, full of omens and amorous oracles. Catullus cannot depict the transports of a courtesan in delirium (*febriculosi scorti*), without describing the eloquent voice of the trembling bed, (*tremulique quassa lecti argutio inambulatioque*). This voice resembled, sometimes, the sound of splitting wood, sometimes the grating of iron against iron, sometimes a prayer, sometimes a threat, sometimes a sigh, sometimes a lamentation. Each sound had a particular sense, fortunate or unfortunate, and very often the tenderest caresses were disturbed or interrupted by warnings of the cubicular genius. A bed which preserved an absolute silence, and which remained silent under the most urgent solicitations, appeared to hold a reservation for the future and a suspicion for love. The place which the bed occupied, too, was not indifferent. It was called *lectus adversus* when it was placed against the door of the room, in order to close that door against evil divinities. It was called *lectus genialis* when it was consecrated to the *Genius* who was the father of Pleasure. This *Genius* it was who gave a soul and a voice to the ivory, the ebony, the cedar or the silver which composed the throne of pleasure. Juvenal pictures for us an obliging wretch who had consented to supply the absent virility of a husband by rendering the latter a father: "During one whole night," he says to him, "I have reconciled you with your wife while you were weeping at the door. I take as my witness the bed where the reconciliation was made, and your own ears which heard the creaking of that bed, and the broken accents of the lady." (*Testis mihi lectulus et tu, ad quam lecti sonus et dominae vox. . .*) If the bed spoke to lovers, in good or evil part, so did everything which surrounded them in the long hours spent under the auspices of Venus; everything took on a persuasive and imperious voice. The sputtering of the lamp was an especially favorable augury, and the lovers had nothing to fear when the flame, flaring up, suddenly shot out a brighter light. Ovid, in his *Heroides*, calls this "the sneezing of the light" (*sternuit et lumen*), and adds that this sneezing promises all the happiness which is to be wished for in love.

The courtesans were the most clever in explaining these omens, which must have been their special province; all the time not given to love they passed in interrogating the Fates and auguries; love was,

moreover, the one object of their worries and their aspirations. If the ordinary course of events did not furnish them with natural auspices which they might interpret, they had various means of forecasting events and of forcing Destiny to betray her secrets, by means of certain noises which they provoked. They would crackle the leaves of a tree with their half-closed fists; they would listen to the sound of laurel leaves on burning coals; they would toss up to the ceiling of their cell cores of the apple or the pear, the stones of cherries or grains of wheat, and seek to touch the mark they had aimed at; sometimes they would scatter over their left hand rose petals which they had fashioned with the other hand in the form of a bubble; at other times they would count the leaves on a poppy stem or the petals of a daisy; finally, they would cast four dice, which must, in falling, promise them the aid of Venus, if all four came up with different numbers. The poets of love are full of these divinations, which make the hearts of lovers beat. These latter, while mindful of the omens which concerned themselves, were equally sensitive to those which concerned everybody else. A prostitute who stumbled over the door-sill or who made a false step over the threshold as she left on her way to the lupanar or the promenade, took care to go back into the house and did not come out the rest of the day, refraining that day from the tasks of her trade. If, upon arising in the morning, she stumbled against the wood of her bedstead, she would go back to bed. The *amasii* and the women devoted to prostitution were more susceptible than any others to omens which they found along their path, to the flight or the cry of birds, to murmurs in the air, to the shape of clouds, to the first person they met, to the last object on which their glance had rested. But, moreover, they were governed by certain omens which had no meaning except for them alone. A wood-pigeon, a dove, a sparrow, a goose, a partridge, those birds dear to Venus and to Priapus, did not appear without good reason in the path of one dreaming only of love, and who believed that by means of such signs she could interpret everything successfully. The emperor Proculus, after having conquered the Sarmatians, beheld, one day, on the façade of the temple of Juno, two sparrows which were diverting themselves. He had the patience to count their cries and their wing-beats; then he ordered that one hundred Sarmatian girls who had never known a man be brought to him; at the end of three days he had them all pregnant as the result of his



labors. When a reprehensible male debauchee heard a goose cry, he felt filled with ardor and strength; if a woman in love (*amasia*) saw a turtle as she walked in the fields, she made a vow to yield to the first man who should demand that she worship Venus with him. It was only necessary to meet a dog face to face in order to be assured that all would go well with one's libidinous desires. But if, on the contrary, you met a cat, it was wise to put off until tomorrow the amorous recreation in question, since no good could come of it.

There were, also, some very singular superstitions which worked exclusively upon the credulity of Venus' followers. These followers, a fantastic and bizarre lot, did not observe the fasts and abstinences of pleasure which matrons imposed upon themselves in honor of a number of religious solemnities, but they did not spare themselves privations of the same sort in order to satisfy certain scruples of conscience which matrons were not supposed to have. A courtesan who had had the weakness to cohabit with a circumcised man (*recutitus*) was condemned thereafter to rest for a whole week. A debauchee, who desired to obtain from a lad or a lass the favor of one or the other Venus had but to formulate his request under the form of a vow addressed to the goddess, and he had the more chances of being heard. "O my sovereign, O Venus!" cries a character in the romance of Athenaeus, while sharing the bed of a handsome adolescent, "if I obtain from this child what I desire, and that without his knowing it, tomorrow I will make you a present of a pair of turtle-doves." The adolescent pretended to snore, and the next day he had a pair of turtle-doves. It was not merely in the case of marriage that the question of virginity appeared to be a difficult one to determine. Libertines sought at great expense the virginity of maidens, and this provided a lucrative trade for the lenons, male and female, who sometimes took their victims at the age of seven or eight years in order to be more certain of the condition of an article of merchandise which was so fragile and so rare. The purchaser frequently demanded proofs, which it would have been very difficult to furnish him, if superstition had not lent credence to a strange custom, which was even employed in marriages by way of establishing the virgin state. This was how the thing was done: at the moment when the girl, who was giving herself as being *intacta*, was about to enter the bed where she would cease to be so, her neck was measured with a thread, which was preserved as something precious until the next

day; then, they would measure it again with the same thread: if the neck had remained of the same thickness, and if the thread exactly fitted, it was concluded that the loss of virginity in this maiden dated back to a period sufficiently remote and was not to be attributed to the one who believed he had taken it; but on the contrary, this virginity became incontestable for the most incredulous in those cases in which the neck had enlarged following the defloration, and in which the thread was, consequently, too short to encircle it completely. It is to this method, as simple as it is naïve, that Catullus makes allusion in his Epithalamium for Thetis and Peleus, by saying: "Tomorrow, her nurse, at daybreak, will no longer be able to encircle the neck of the bride with the thread of the night before."

*Non illam nutrix orienti luce revisens,  
Hesterno collum poterit circumdare collo.*

This thread which had established a state of virginity, thanks frequently to the connivance of the one charged with the measuring the neck of the virgin who had become a woman, was suspended in the temple of Fortuna Virginalis, erected by Servius Tullius near the Porta Capena; with this happy thread one dedicated to the goddess, also known as *Virginensis Dea*, the other evidence of virginity, written in characters of blood on the victim's linen: "You offer to Fortuna Virginalis the soiled vestments of young girls!" cries Arnobius, with an indignation which St. Augustine shares in his *City of God*. This Fortuna Virginalis was none other than Venus, to whom were also offered nuts, in order to recall the fact that, during the first wedding night, the conjugal mystery was accomplished to the sound of *nuts*, which the children scattered with a great noise over the threshold of the bridal chamber in order to stifle the cries of expiring virginity. "Slave, give, oh, give nuts to children!" (*Concubine, nuces da*), says Catullus in the nuptial song of Julia and Manlius. "Husband, do not spare the nuts!" says Virgil in his bucolics: *Sparge, marite, nuces!* In the eyes of the Romans, to whom everything was an allegory, the nut represented the enigma of marriage—the nut, the shell of which must first be broken before one knows what it contains.

## CHAPTER XXIV

THE courtezans, especially the Greek courtezans, who were the delight of the Roman voluptuaries, possessed no historian or panegyrist as did those whom Greece had recognized in a political, philosophical and literary way, by decreeing them a sort of cult, remarkable for the enthusiasm and admiration manifested. The Romans, we have already said, were more gross, more material, and also more sensual than the Greeks of the century of Pericles and Aspasia. What they demanded of their women of pleasure, of those foreign women whose language they scarcely understood, was not a brilliant, substantial, profound and witty conversation, an echo of the lessons of the Academy of Athens, a reminiscence of the golden age of hetairai; no, they sought, they appreciated nothing but pleasures less ideal, and they included solely among the auxiliaries of physical love good cheer, perfumes, song, music, pantomime and the dance. They did not accord, moreover, beyond the *triclinium* and the *cubile* (the dining-room and bed-chamber), any influence to the customary companions of their orgies and their debaucheries. The life of courtezans was, then, never public, and whatever intimacy it possessed was evidenced in the society of young libertines. This society, undoubtedly, wholly occupied as it was with its own pleasures, included poets and writers who might have been able to devote their prose or their verse to the biography of those courtezans with whom they lived in such good faith. But this lubricious subject impressed them as being unworthy of being handed down to posterity. And if each of them consented to sing the mistress whom he himself had taken, transforming her, so to speak, through the advocacy of love, none of them, at least among the self-respecting authors, would have dared to turn poet to the courtezans of Rome as a whole; just as the painters, who did not refuse to do the portrait of their own *pretiosae* and *famosae* would have blushed to take the title, as did certain Greek artists, of *courtesan-painters*. If a few lines especially devoted to the history and customs of celebrated courtezans among the Romans were written under the dictation of these sirens, and with the object of immortalizing them, we may still suppose with good reason that such works did not emanate from distinguished

pens, and that they must have been destroyed along with the *molles libri* and all the obscene writings which paganism did not endeavor to defend against the just anathema of Evangelic morality.

But on the other hand, the poets, who were then, as in all times, the table-companions and the lovers of courtezans, showed themselves anxious to accord the latter in particular cases the homage which they would have been ashamed to give them in general; their love, in their eyes, elevated the one who was the object of it; the latter became from then on, no longer a lost woman, branded with infamy by the law and stigmatized with the name of *meretrix*. She was a loved woman, and, as such, worthy of regard and delicate attentions. On her side, the courtesan, in perceiving herself loved, would sometimes forget her profession and really feel the love which she had inspired, of which she was proud, and which gave her the only honorable reputation to which she was permitted to aspire: "Thus," says M. Walkenaer, in his *Life of Horace*, which we do not quote with as much confidence as we do the original authorities, "thus, despite the precepts given to young girls destined for the profession of courtesan by those who had reared them for this profession, they were, none the less, susceptible to a true love." It is, then, in the collections of the classic poets, it is in the poems addressed by them to these courtezans, that we must seek the elements for a history of these coryphées of Roman Prostitution. Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius and Martial furnish us with the only documents which may serve in drawing up an inventory, very summary and very incomplete, of the courtezans who were in vogue from the elevation of Augustus to the imperial throne to the reign of Trajan (41 B.C.-100 A.D.). These courtezans, whom we shall term the Muses of the erotic poets, belonged, for the most part, to the class of *famosae*, and were those whose minds, beauty and cleverness had given them the rights of the city; but as they grew old, most of them fell back into the obscure throng of *meretrices* of low degree, and some of them, after having seen consuls, praetors and the generals of armies seated at their table and disputing their favors, which were paid for at fabulous prices, after having been surrounded with customers, slaves, lenons and poets, after having inhabited the palace and spent, in feasts and prodigalities of all sorts, the gold of several conquered provinces, had fallen by degrees into such an abandonment, such misery, that one might find them of an evening covered with an old *cento* or vari-



colored cloak wandering among the she-wolves of the Summoenium and offering to the unknown passer-by the infamous service of hand or mouth. These shameful examples of the decline of courtezans did not even excite the pity of their former adulators, and the latter, who had loved them most, would turn away from them with horror, as we learn from Catullus, who met in this manner, clothed in the opprobrium of Prostitution, one of the mistresses whom he had hymned amid the splendors of the gallant life.

We shall, first of all, review the loves of Horace, in order to make the acquaintance of the great courtezans of his time; for Horace, sage and prudent always, even in matters of pleasure, cared only for easy loves, such as would not interfere with his peace of mind. The terrible Julian law against adulteresses no longer existed; but Roman jurisprudence, although fallen into desuetude on this delicate point, left arms none the less terrible in the hands of a deceived husband, a father or a brother outraged by the dissolute conduct of a daughter or a sister. Horace knew that one could not become, with impunity, the lover of a matron, and that a lover taken in adultery ran the risk of being punished upon the very scene of his crime, by a husband who might be content with cutting off the nose and ears of the guilty party, with depriving the latter of his character of a man and the attributes of virility, or finally, with disemboweling him in the presence of his fair accomplice. Horace, in the second satire of his first book, à propos of Cupiennius, who was very eager for the love of matrons (*mirator cunni Cupiennius albi*), enumerates the victims whom this love had claimed, and whose pleasures had been sadly interrupted (*multo corrupta dolore voluptas*): "The one threw himself from a roof; another is dead under the lashes; this one, in fleeing, fell among a band of robbers; this one purchased his skin with his crowns; this other has been defiled by the urine of vile slaves; what is more, the iron has cut off the vital parts of one of his rakish companions (*quia etiam illud accidit ut cuidam testes caudamque salacem demeteret ferrum*).” Horace repeats, then, the vow which Sallust often made: "As for me, I never touch a matron (*matronam nullam ego tango*)"; but he did not imitate the other follies of Sallust, who ruined himself over freed-women; he did not imitate Marsaeus, who dissipated his patrimony and sold even his house in order to keep a dancer named Origo: "I have never had an affair with the wives of other men," remarked Marsaeus to Horace. . . . "No," replied

the poet, "but you have had affairs with mountebanks and with prostitutes (*meretricibus*), who ruin the reputation even more than the purse."

And yet, Horace did not disdain, on his own account, the courtezans and dancers; but he kept, with them, a watch over both his purse and his health. He preserved the use of his reason amid all the disorders of his senses, and he was always sufficiently master of himself not to put himself at the mercy of a woman, even though he were passionately fond of her. In his liveliest passions, a disciple as he was of the Epicurean philosophy, he followed, first of all, the inspirations of sensual pleasure, and he carefully avoided all that might result in embarrassment, annoyance or boredom. That is why, without speaking of the shameful debauches contrary to nature which Roman manners authorized, he did not concentrate his affection upon a single object, but shared it ordinarily among a number of women friends, who were, successively or simultaneously, his mistresses. That is why, upon examining the question with a cold impartiality, he preferred, to the dangerous promiscuity of matronly gallantries, the tranquil possession of mercenary mistresses: "In order not to repent," he says to an idolator of great ladies, "cease to pursue the matrons, for there is in this labor more evil to gain than profit to receive. A matron, if you will permit me, Cerinthus, despite her cameos and her emeralds, has otherwise a thigh no more flawless nor a leg better shaped; sometimes even, you find a better one on a courtesan (*atque etiam melius persaepe togatae est*). Add, also, that the merchandise of this latter is not overlaid with rouge; whatever she has to sell, she sells openly; what beauty she has, she does not pride herself on, but shows it; she will tell you in advance what defects she has; it is a custom of coachmen who buy horses to submit them to a general inspection. . . . With a matron, save for her face, you can see nothing; the rest, if it is not at Catia's house,\* is hidden until the robe has been removed. If you would glimpse this forbidden fruit, which is so hedged in (and it is this which makes you appear so foolish), a thousand obstacles then arise in your path: guardians, a litter, coiffeurs, parasites and that stole which falls to the ankles and that cloak which envelops her; these are all barriers which do not permit you to approach your end."

\*Translator's Note:—Catia was a matron known for her loose manners. See text following.

Horace, in this satire, in which he reveals himself, along with his tastes and habits, goes on to compare this matron, who is so well-guarded, with a courtesan, who surrenders herself before one makes the attack: "With her," he says, "nothing is an obstacle; her gauze permits you to see her as well as though she were nude; you can almost measure with the eye the most secret parts; you can see then that her leg is not ill-shaped or her foot ugly. Should you prefer to have a trap set for you and the price of the merchandise demanded before you had seen it?" Moreover, Horace avows that he has no patience when the flame of desire circulates in his veins (*tument tibi quum inguina*), and that he then addresses himself to the first maid, to the first infant, who comes along: "I love," he says frankly, "easy and convenient amours (*namque parabilem amo Venerem facilemque*). She who says to us: 'After a while . . . give me more time . . . wait till my husband has left . . . ' I leave such a one to the priests of Cybele, as Philco says. He takes the one who does not hold herself at so high a price, and who makes no point of waiting when one orders her to come. Let her be beautiful, well-built and well-groomed, but not to the point of desiring to appear whiter or better-built than nature has made her. This one, when my right flank presses her left flank, is my Ilia and my Egeria; I give her the name that pleases me. And I do not fear, while I am making love (*dum futuo*), that the husband will come back from the country, that the door will be broken down, that the dog will bark, that the house will fall about my ears, that the lady will turn pale, leap out of bed and lament her unhappiness, that she will be afraid, or that I myself shall have to tremble on my own account; for in such a case, there is nothing to do but flee, with bare feet and garments in disorder, or else, woe to your crowns, to your buttocks and to your reputation! . . . Poor wretch, he who is taken! I side with Fabius." Horace, in his amiable Epicureanism, knew pleasure rather than love.

His first mistress, the one at least whom he first celebrated in his poems, was named Neaera. He loved her, or rather, he kept her for more than a year, during the consulate of Plancus, in the year of Rome 714. He was at this time twenty-five years old, and he had not as yet made a name for himself among the poets; he was then too poor to pay dearly for the favors of this singer, who undoubtedly did not possess at this time the vogue which she was later to attain at the *comissationes*. One night, she enlaced her young lover in her

arms and uttered this vow, to which the moon was a mute witness: "So long as the wolf pursues the lamb; so long as Orion, the terror of sailors, stirs up the angry sea and the tempests; so long as the zephyrs caress the long locks of Apollo, I will render you love for love!" But the vow was soon forgotten, and Neaera squandered her nights with a richer lover, who could better afford to pay for them. She did not wish, however, to quarrel with Horace, who broke off all relations with her, saying: "Yes, if there is something of a man in Flaccus (*si quid in Flacco viri est*), then I shall seek a love which responds to my own!" He detached himself then and there from the faithless Neaera, and predicted to his rival that he himself would be abandoned in turn, even though he possessed numerous flocks and vast domains, even though he was handsomer than Nireus, and even though he could cause the Pactolus to flow through his mistress' house. The latter distinguished herself afterwards as a singer, and when Horace, thanks to his poetry, had won the friendship of Maecenas and the favors of Augustus, he remembered Neaera and often sent for her to sing at the feasts which he gave to his friends: "Go, young slave," he says, in an Ode on the return of the emperor after a war in Spain, "bring us perfume, crowns and an amphora contemporary with the Marsian war, if it has escaped the bands of Sparticus. Say to the songstress, Neaera, that she should hasten to knot her braids, perfumed with myrrh; if her cursed porter delays in opening the gate, come back without her. Age, which whitens my head, has extinguished my ardor, and I am now a little averse to quarrels and strife; I should have been less patient in my hot youth, under the consulate of Plancus!" He had loved Neaera more than he loved his other mistresses; for he desired to avenge himself on her by showing her what she had lost through her infidelity.

"At the time when Horace entered the world," says M. Walkenaer, in his *Life* of his favorite poet, "there were at Rome three courtezans renowned among all those of their profession; they were Origo, Lycoris, and Arbuscula." Unfortunately, the ancient scholiasts do not enlighten us much with regard to these *famosae*, whom they are content to name, and Horace, who does not appear to have had personal relations with them, merely tells us that the first had reduced to poverty the opulent Marsaeus. He affects also to link with the name of this avid and prodigal courtesan that of a patrician woman, named Catia, known for her debaucheries and for the fond-



ness she had for indecently raising her robe when she was promenading in the Via Sacra. This Catia, who did not blush at rivaling the courtezans in public, was one day surprised in adultery in the temple of Venus Theatina near Pompey's theatre, and the populace pursued her with stones. Her adultery, according to one scholiast, was out of the ordinary; for she had been found giving herself at the same time to Valerius, a tribune of the people, and to a Sicilian rustic (*Valerio ac siculo colono*); other scholiasts, however, assign her but a single accomplice in this flagrant act. Catia's misadventures served once more to confirm Horace's ideas as to the preference which was to be shown for the love of courtezans. He was faithless but once to his principle, when he permitted himself to be seduced by a debauched old woman who belonged to an illustrious family and who charmed him with her false airs of philosophy and learning. He would voluntarily have limited his liaison with this female Stoic to relations purely literary, and he could not submit for long to the amorous exigencies which he felt he did not have the courage to satisfy. He was, too, attached to a beautiful courtesan named Inachia, and he would have been ashamed to offer her an unworthy rival. This latter was irritated at seeing herself at first neglected, soon shoved to one side, then detested and repulsed; she undoubtedly endeavored to take revenge on Horace through Inachia; but Horace made common cause with his mistress, to whom he sacrificed, without regret and without pity, the odious old libertine who had held him like a bird of prey. Two horrible epigrams which he had coined against her ran about Rome and caused all the world to point a finger at her: "You demand of me, venerable ruin," he says, in the first of these two pieces, "you demand to know what it is has enfeebled my vigor, you whose teeth are black, whose forehead is furrowed with wrinkles, and whose hideous anus yawns between two fleshless buttocks like that of a cow with the diarrhoea? Undoubtedly that bosom of yours, that putrid throat and those breasts like those of a mare, undoubtedly that flaccid belly and those pock-marked thighs, set upon hydropic legs, ought to excite my desires! . . . But it will have to suffice you to be rich and to have the images of your ancestors borne in funeral processions; for there is not a woman who struts laden with heavier pearls than yours. . . . What! because the books of philosophy are scattered over the silken cushions, you think it is that which affects my nerves—my nerves, which care little enough

for letters—and which causes my love to languish? Ah, you tried hard enough to provoke me to satisfy you (*ut superbo provocas ab inguine*); but your mouth had to come to your assistance (*ore ad laborandum est tibi*).” In his second Ode, Horace draws an even more hideous picture of this immodest creature: “What do you seek, O woman worthy of being coupled with black elephants? Why do you keep sending presents and letters to me, who am far from being a vigorous lad, but whose sense of smell is not blunted? . . . For, when it comes to sniffing a polyp or the unclean goat which hides under your armpits, I have a finer nose than the hunt-dog which scents the lair of the wild boar. What perspiration and what infectious miasmas exhale from all her withered members, when she forces herself to assuage an insatiable fury which betrays her exhausted lover (*pene soluto*), as she, her disgusting face smeared with damp chalk and rouge, prepared from the excrements of the crocodile, breaks her couch and tears down her bed-curtains in her lubricious transports!” It required nothing less than this for Horace to free himself from the jealous pursuit of the Lady of the Elephants (*mulier nigris dignissima barris*).

Unfortunately, we know no more than the name of that Inachia whom Horace proclaimed three times in a night as the goddess of pleasure (*Inachiam ter nocte potes!* enviously cried Inachia’s unworthy rival); but about the same time, Horace was intrigued with another courtesan, who yielded nothing in point of beauty to Inachia, and who, in addition, gave herself gratis to her poet. Horace called her, probably for this reason, the *good* Cinara. He was not able to keep her long, and soon Cinara was in quest of a more prodigal lover. She had little difficulty in finding one, and Horace, who was inconsolable, could forget her only by drowning himself in the fumes of Bacchus. This disinterested courtesan had the misfortune to become a mother. The poet, Propertius, who was by her side during the pains of childbirth, counseled her to make a vow to Juno, and at once, under the auspices of that compassionate goddess, Cinara was delivered. This vow made to Juno appears to have determined the opinion of scholiasts, who would have it that Cinara died in childbirth. Horace regretted her all his life, amid all the loves which succeeded this one, which he incessantly recalled. Cinara, the good Cinara, became associated, in the memories of Horace’s youth, with his fondest illusions; Cinara had loved him for himself, disinterestedly, and

without reward; "I am no longer what I was under the reign of the good Cinara!" he remarked tristfully, in approaching his fiftieth year. Gratidia, who replaced Cinara, was not calculated to condemn the latter to forgetfulness: Gratidia had been beautiful and a courtesan like the other; but the years, by dispersing the throng of her admirers, had led her to combine with her trade of courtesan an industry that was surer and less variable. Gratidia was a perfumer and a *saga*, or magician: she sold philtres, she manufactured them also, and the commentators of Horace have assumed that she tried out the power of these aphrodisiacs upon her lover, whom she thought thus to hold with a firmer grip. But Horace, on the contrary, was not slow in shaking off the yoke which the conjuration and the beverages had not succeeded in rendering light and agreeable to him. The poet had a horror of those shady works, to which his relations with a *saga* made him an accomplice; he feared also for his health, which too energetic stimulants might impair, and so he separated violently from Gratidia. The latter employed her magic art to hold him and to bring him back; all was in vain, and Horace, advised of the libidinous relations which Gratidia secretly had entered into with an old debauchee named Varus, made use of this pretext for an open break. Gratidia then complained loudly, accusing him of ingratitude and threatening him with terrible reprisals. Horace knew all that she was capable of, and so did not wait for a vengeance which might strike him through poison rather than through evil spells. He denounced to public opinion, in his verses, the criminal practices of the art of the *sagae*, disgracing Gratidia under the transparent name of Canidia. We have cited elsewhere the sinister revelations which Horace makes on the subject of the mysteries of the Esquiline hill. Gratidia was, perhaps, forced to explain and clear herself before the magistrates; she obtained from Horace, we do not know through what influence or at what price, a sort of poetic retraction, shot through, however, with a bitter and insulting irony: "I recognize, with humility, the power of your art," he said in this new Ode, destined to counteract the terrible effect of the other two, "in the name of the kingdom of Proserpine and of the implacable Diana, I conjure you on my knees, spare me, spare me! Too long have I undergone the effects of your vengeance, O lover dear to sailors and foreign merchants! See, my youth has fled! . . . Your magic perfumes have whitened my hair. . . . Overcome by my sufferings, I believe what

I denied for long. . . . Yes, your enchantments have reached my heart. . . . My lyre, which you accuse of imposture, would you have it resound for you? Ah well! you shall be modesty, you shall be probity itself! No, there is nothing abject in your birth. . . . No, you do not go by night, wise magician, to disperse, nine days after death, the ashes of the miserable. . . . Your soul is generous and your hands are pure!" To this forced disavowal, Canidia responds with imprecations: "What! you would, with impunity, like a new pontiff, launch thunderbolts and fill Rome with my name! You might, without incurring my wrath, divulge the secret rites of Cotytto and make mockery of the mysteries of the free god of Love!" This passage evidently proves that Gratidia, like the majority of the *sagae*, lent herself to incredible debaucheries and was not unfamiliar with certain nocturnal orgies, which were marked by a weird promiscuity of the sexes, as though an attempt were being made to revive the obscene cult of Cotytto, the Venus of Thrace, the ancient hermaphroditic goddess of Syria. "Death will come too slow for your liking!" cried the infernal Canidia, "you shall drag out a miserable and hateful life, serving as the pasture to sufferings always new. . . . Sometimes, in an access of gloomy despair, you will want to hurl yourself from a tower or plunge a dagger into your heart; sometimes, but in vain, you will encircle your neck with a deadly cord, but I, triumphant, will launch myself from the earth, and you shall feel me bounding upon your shoulders!"

Horace had need to get his breath after such an amour as this, born amid erotic potions and under the sway of magic invocations; he never pardoned Canidia, for he let fly thereafter more than one poisoned dart against her, and he might rejoice at having made of the nickname which he had given her a pseudonym for a female poisoner: "Canidia, has she then prepared her horrible viands?" he said a long time afterward, in criticising the garlic. Horace was exceedingly sensitive to bad odors, which reacted on his nervous system; he had, thus, an aversion for a very beautiful courtesan named Hagna, whose odor he did not fancy, but who was not less idolized by her lover Balbinus. We shall pass over in silence the numerous distractions which Horace sought in the domain of the masculine Venus, and we shall lay to the account of Roman depravity the constant infidelities which he committed toward his Bathyllus, as he wreathed himself with flowers and drank off his Cecubum or



his Falernian. Horace was not more moral than his century, and if he loved women prodigiously, he loved boys no less, whom he often even preferred to them: "Beauty, wherever it was to be met with," says the learned M. Walkenaer, "made upon him a lively and ardent impression; it absorbed his thoughts, disturbed his sleep, inflamed his desires; he seized every occasion to satisfy his passion, without being stopped by scruples and considerations which possessed no force in his day." In one of his Epodes addressed to Pettius, he recognizes the fact that love will not leave him alone, but is constantly inflaming him with a passion for adolescent boys and young girls: "Now it is Lysiscus whom I love," he says with passion, "Lyciscus, who is more beautiful and more voluptuous than a woman. Neither the reproaches of my friends nor the disdain of this youth are sufficient to detach me from him; nothing could do so, unless it were another love for a white young girl or for a beautiful adolescent with long locks." When the poet thus avowed his shameful weakness, winter had three times denuded the forests, he says in the same Ode, since his reason had been freed from the clutches of Inachia. It was at this time, in the course of his thirtieth year, that he became hopelessly enamored of Lyce. She was a foreign courtesan who practiced Prostitution for the profit of her pretended husband, and who had the cleverness to resist at first the poet's pressing solicitations.

Acron and Porphyryon, who have collected a number of precious details concerning all the persons named in the poems of Horace, have not informed us as to the true name of this Lyce, whom the poet loved above all his mistresses; they merely inform us that she was of Tyrrhenian origin, that is to say, she had been born in Etruria, where the entire population, if we may rely upon the evidence of the historian Theopompus, was given to the most unbridled debauchery. Plautus gives us to understand that manners had not changed much since his time, when he places these words in the mouth of a character in his *Cistellaria*: "You will not be constrained to amass a dowry, like the women of Tuscany, by trading unworthily in your attractions." Lyce then was merely following the principles of her fatherland, when she sold herself to the highest bidder, and when, after her riches had been shamefully acquired and she had been able to surround herself with the retinue of a respectable woman, she pretended to be married in order to raise the price of her favors. Horace was deceived, like everybody else; he believed that he was dealing

with a virtuous woman, and despite his repugnances on the score of adultery, he violated his rule by coming at night to hang up wreaths on the door of this astute courtesan, who at first shut eyes and ears against him. He grew hardy by degrees and went to knock on that inexorable door, which opened for others as well as for himself, and which presents alone could open. It was by means of an ode that he overcame the feigned severity of the beautiful Etrurian, who was not under the authority of any husband, but who had beside her a trusty lenon. This ode, composed in a genre which the Greeks call *paraclausithyron*, was a chant to music before the closed door of a cruel fair one: "When you were living under the law of a barbarous husband, by the distant springs of Tanais," says the amorous poet, "you groaned to see me, Lyce, prostrate in front of your door, at the mercy of the north wind! Hear how this door is beaten by the winds, as the trees of your garden groan and cause the roof of your house to groan! See how the snow which covers the earth is hardened under a pure and icy sky! Abase that pride of yours, which is hostile to Venus! . . . You will not always see a lover exposed, on the threshold of your dwelling, to the intemperance of the seasons."

Horace certainly did not know that Lyce was a courtesan when, in order to bend her to his desires, he pictured for her her husband in the arms of a Thessalian concubine, named Pieria; when he told her that her father, originally of Tyrrhenia, should not have engendered a Penelope who was a rebel against love; when he had recourse to prayers and tears to supplement his futile gifts. But there were no more refusals, so soon as one gave what was asked; he was generous; he was as happy as one could be, and he remained for some time the titular lover of Lyce, who gave him his congé only to make room for one richer and younger. He did not readily console himself for having been abandoned, and he sought in vain to renew a liaison which had been broken against the dictates of his own heart. His resentment against Lyce burst forth when the beauty of this courtesan began to show the marks of her libertine life: "The gods, Lyce, have heard my vows!" he cried, with a joy which did not prove that his love was even then extinct: "Yes, Lyce, my vows are accomplished: there you are, an old woman, and you wish still to appear young; with a quavering voice, after you have been drinking, you solicit Cupid, who flees you; he reposes on the fresh cheeks of the beautiful Chias, who knows how to sing so well; he disdains, in his

flight, the arid oaks; he flees you for the reason that your yellow teeth, your wrinkles and your white hair frighten him; neither the purple of Cos nor precious stones shall give you back those years which rapid time has buried, as it were, in the history of the past. Where, alas! are your beauty, your freshness, your matronly graces? That radiant face, which almost equaled Cinara's own, and which the arts have a hundred times reproduced, what remains of it now? What remains of her in whom all love breathed and who ravished even me? But the Fates gave scant years to Cinara, while they have let you live, like a hundred-year crow, so that ardent youth might see, not without laughing, a torch that has sunk to ashes." There is in this piece the spite and the regret of an abandoned lover. And one cannot regard except as hyperbole a portrait so different from the one that Horace had painted with enthusiasm a few years before. Women and, above all, courtezans, among the Romans, were, it is true, not young for long; the warm climate, the many baths, the cosmetics and the aphrodisiacs, the feasts and excesses of all sorts were not slow in withering the first flower of a spring-time that bordered winter, a winter that took with it the pleasures of love. Old age for women began at thirty years, and if erotic fires still burned under the white lead and the rouge, such women were forced to have recourse, in order to feed these fires, to eunuchs, to *spadones*, to gladiators, to slaves, or even to the secret and shameful compensations of the *fascinum*.

At the very time that Horace was in possession of Lyce's charms, he was not resisting the seductions of another enchantress, and he set an example of incontinence for his new mistress by coming to her, so to speak, by way of Pyrrha's bed; he did not love the latter, he was not jealous of her, for one day he surprised her in a grotto, where she was lying under the roses, in the arms of a beautiful adolescent with perfumed hair. He did not disturb the kisses of these lovers, who did not suspect his presence; he contented himself with admiring them, each of them drunken with love and quivering with ardor. He was delighted with this voluptuous spectacle, and retired noiselessly, before the happy couple could see or hear him. But the following day, he sent an ode of adieu to Pyrrha, to let her know what he had seen and that he had been cured of a love so unhappily shared with another: "Woe to those for whom you shine like a sea which they have not braved! As for me, the votive tablet which I hang up on

the walls of the temple of Love shall bear witness that I have laid aside my dripping garments after my shipwreck!" For the victims of shipwreck were in the habit of hanging up, in the temple of Neptune, such a votive tablet, recalling the danger from which they had escaped; Horace alludes to this custom, when he thanks the god of lovers for having saved him from a sea of torments, jealousy and infidelity. It is a remarkable fact that the poet, who never prided himself upon his own constancy, would not suffer the least perfidy on the part of a mistress; and yet, all his mistresses were courtezans! We may attribute to an excessive vanity, rather than to a delicacy of manners, this intolerance, which contrasted with his epicurean doctrines; the only time, perhaps, that he was not jealous, and when he even lent himself to a partnership, was when his friend, Aristius Fuscus, cast eyes on a freed woman named Lalage, with whom he took a vacation from the courtesan pleasures of Rome, in his Sabine villa. This Lalage was barely out of infancy, and, not knowing how to resist Fuscus' attentions, made a pretext of her age and refrained on this score from yielding to him; but Horace, sacrificing love to friendship, took up the interests of his friend by inviting the latter to be patient for a time until he should have triumphed over the refusals of Lalage: "Do not pluck the grape while it is still green," he said to him; "wait: the autumn will ripen the dark fruit and give it its purple hue; soon Lalage will seek you out herself, for the flight of time, despite us and her, brings the years, which will ravage her as they go; soon, with an eye less timid, she will provoke love and make herself dearer than Chloris and that coquette, Pholoë, ever were; she will show her white shoulders and shine like the moon on the bosom of the sea." While waiting, he celebrated, in his voluptuous verses, Lalage's infantile charms, and he ran through the Sabine forests learning the name of Lalage from all the echoes. He undoubtedly was deceived by this freed-woman, as he was at almost the same time by another, Barine, less of a child and quite as charming as Lalage. According to the scholiasts, Barine called herself Julia Varina, for the reason that she was one of the freed-women of the Julian family. Horace had also a monomania for making of this courtesan a faithful sweetheart, but he perceived almost at once that her vows were but a means of extracting from him more presents: "Barine," he wrote to her, "I should believe you, if a single one of your perjuries had been followed by a chastisement; if a single one of your teeth



had become less white; if a single one of your nails had been deformed; but, perfidious one, barely have you with your deceitful oaths won my faith anew than you appear more beautiful than ever and exhibit with still more pride that youthfulness which I adore! Yes, Barine, you may, with false words, take as witness the waves of the sea, the silent stars of the night, the gods who are inaccessible to clammy death. Venus shall laugh at your sacrileges; the indulgent nymphs and the cruel Cupid, sharpening incessantly his ardent arrows, shall laugh at them. It is but too true that all the adolescents grow up only to assure you of new slaves. Those whom you retain in your service reproach you with your treasons, and yet cannot make up their minds to leave the hearth of an impious mistress!"

Horace at this time, aged thirty-eight (271 B.C.), was yielding to all the mad whims that his temperament inspired; he was seeking a faithful mistress and he did not find one, from fault of not setting her an example; he often retired to one of his country houses, at Praeneste or Ustica, and would take with him there to pass the time some beautiful freed-woman, who soon would grow tired of this sort of service, and who would leave him to return to Rome. As he was about to depart for Ustica, his Sabine farm, he encountered in the Via Sacra a young woman, wearing the toga and clad in a blond wig; her beauty was so marvelous that everyone stared at her with admiration, but this beauty was still further heightened by that of a companion older than she, though not less attractive. The resemblance of the two courtezans, who differed only in age, was sufficient to prove that one was a daughter of the other. Horace was astonished, and felt himself falling in love on the spot with both at once; but when he learned that the mother was a friend of that perfumer, Gratidia, upon whom he had conferred so unpleasant a celebrity, he resolved to pay his attentions only to the daughter, named Tyndaris, a singer by profession, kept by a certain Cyrus, a jealous and choleric fellow who beat her. And so, the poet sent this declaration of love to Tyndaris: "The gods protect me, the gods love my incense and my verses. Follow me and Abundance shall pour from her fecund horn all the treasures of the field. There, in a solitary valley, sheltered from the heat of the dog-days, you shall sing, to Anacreon's lyre, of the faithful Penelope, the deceitful Circe and their unhappy love for the same hero. There, in the shade, you shall empty without peril a chalice of Lesbos, and the combats of Bacchus shall not end like

those of Mars; you shall no longer have to fear a jealous and angry lover, who, abusing your weakness, dares lay upon you his brutal hands, to snatch the flowers from your hair and to rend your innocent veil." The songstress, upon receiving this ode, went to consult her mother, who told her of the unworthy conduct of the poet towards Gratidia, and who advised her not to expose herself to similar treatment. Tyndaris replied then to Horace that she could not, without offending her mother, accept the attentions of one who had so insulted—nay, prosecuted—Gratidia. Then Horace endeavored by flattery to win over to his side Tyndaris' mother and wrote: "O you, the more beautiful daughter of a beautiful mother,\* to you I abandon my guilty iambi; command, and they shall be consumed by the flame or buried in the wave. . . . Appease my irritated soul. I too, in the happy days of my youth, I too have known resentment, and I was led in my delirium to weave bloody iambi. Today, I would have peace after war; as for those insulting verses, I disavow them, but give me back my heart, and become my mistress!" Tyndaris was touched, and reconciled Horace with the old Gratidia, bearing, herself, the cost of the reconciliation.

It was after Tyndaris that Lydia inspired in the fickle poet one of the liveliest passions which he had yet experienced. Lydia was greatly taken with a very young man whom she was engaged in seducing from those gymnastic exercises and the laborious tasks which were a part of his patrician education; Horace reproached her with thus ruining the future of the young man, whom he succeeded by showing that he was more liberal than the other. But scarcely had he taken the place of this beardless Sybarite when Lydia, as capricious as he could ever have been, gave him for rival a certain Telephus, who was smitten with her and who had captivated her senses. Horace was not the man to endure such a rivalry; he put a good face on the matter, however, and endeavored, by gentle persuasion, to struggle against a robust rival who each evening would upset all the plans the poet had made in the morning. The most amorous poem was without avail in the face of the deeds and jests of this able lover: "Ah, Lydia!" the poet cries in a charming ode, which did not even so much as move this beautiful but inhuman creature, "when you praise in my presence Telephus' rosy complexion and ivory arms, woe to you! My heart becomes inflamed and swells

\*Translator's Note:—The famous "*O matre pulchra filia pulchrior.*" *Odes*, I., xvi.

with wrath. Then my spirit is troubled, I blush. A furtive tear rolls down my cheek and betrays the secret fires with which I am slowly being devoured. O grief! When I see your white shoulders shamefully bruised by him in his drunken fury; when I see your lips where his cruel teeth have imprinted their bite! No, if you would only listen to me, you would not trust that barbarous one whose kisses tear that divine mouth where Venus has dispersed her sweetest nectar. Happy, three times happy, those who are bound by an indissoluble tie, whom quarrels cannot sunder from one another, and whom Death alone, too soon, can separate!" Lydia disdained Horace's prayers and advice; she did not dismiss the lover who had bitten her, and who had bruised her with his blows, but instead, closed her door to the importunate counsellor. Horace could not remain a single day without a mistress. Although he loved with more than frenzy the faithless one who had driven him away, he desired, by the number of his gallant distractions, to stifle this love, which remained all the more alive in his heart; and so, he would parade his latest mistresses: "When a more worthy love called me," he says in one Ode, "I was held in the dear bonds of Myrtale, the freed-woman Myrtale, held in greater transport than the waves of the Adriatic, when they bellow with rage in the Calabrian Gulf." But he could not console himself for having lost Lydia. He returned to Rome, and he learned with joy that the brutal Telephus had a successor, and that the beautiful Lydia was being kept by Calaïs, the son of Ornythus of Thurium; Calaïs, young and handsome, had nothing to fear from his rival. Horace went to see Lydia, and she was not without emotion at the interview; they fell into each other's arms. The poet chanted his reconciliation in this admirable dialogue: "So long as I was pleasing to you and no lover, more preferred, encircled with his arms your neck of ivory, I lived happy as the greatest king. . . . So long as you did not burn for another, and Lydia did not follow Chloë, Lydia lived prouder and more glorious than the mother of Romulus. . . . Chloë over me today reigns; I love her gentle voice, mated with the sound of her lyre; for her, I should not fear death, if the Fates would only spare her life. . . . I share the fires of Calaïs, son of Ornythus of Thurium; for him, I would suffer a thousand deaths, if the Fates would spare his life. . . . But what if that first love should come back? If he should bring once more under his yoke our severed hearts? If I should flee the blonde Chloë and my door should open once more

to Lydia? . . . Although he is more beautiful than the day, while you are lighter than the leaf and more irritable than the waves, it is still with you that I should love to live, with you that I should love to die!"

The loves of courtezans were changeful: Lydia soon returned to Calais and Horace to his Chloë, regretting Lydia all the while and afflicted by the thought that he had not been able to hold her. The blonde Chloë was still a child when she sold her flower to the poet, who soon grew negligent of her to devote his attention to two other mistresses, more mature and less unsophisticated, to Phyllis, the freed-woman of Xanthias, and to Glycera, Tibullus' former sweetheart. It was under a singular circumstance that Phyllis' hidden beauties were first revealed to him and that he grew jealous of them. One day, he was on his way to pay a visit to a friend named Xanthias, a young Greek of Phocia, an Epicurean and a voluptuary like himself; he would not permit his presence to be announced to his amiable host, who, he was told, was shut up in the library of his house, amid busts and portraits of his ancestors; he conceived the idea of surprising him, and surprise him he did, but he did not find him with his head over a book: Xanthias had dismissed all his domestics, in order to be alone with the young slave girl whom he had made his concubine. Horace, arrested on the threshold, did not disturb a tête-à-tête the curious details of which he observed, and the pleasure of which he, in a manner, shared. Xanthias perceived that he had a silent witness of his happiness and became conscious of himself and his situation; he blushed with shame and brutally chased the beautiful Phyllis away; who was loud in her reproaches for his abandonment, and who retired in great confusion before her master's wrath. There was among the Romans a very widespread and inveterate prejudice which looked upon intimate relations between a free man and a slave girl as dishonorable. Xanthias was inconsolable at having revealed his secret in spite of himself, and barely listened to the reasoning of Horace, who sought to justify in the eyes of his friend an amorous weakness the blame for which he would gladly have taken upon his own head. Horace praised, in no doubtful fashion, Xanthias' accomplice, and left his friend with a sort of jealousy which put Phyllis back into her master's esteem. Following Horace's advice, Xanthias began by freeing this slave in order that he might not have to blush at his relations with her. Horace had sent him an ode, in which the



poet flattered Phyllis in the most delicate manner, by comparing her to the white Briseïs, beloved of Achilles, to Tecmessa, beloved of Ajax, her master, and to the Trojan virgin with whom Agamemnon was taken after the fall of Troy: "Do not blush to love your slave girl, O Xanthias!" he said. "How do you know but the blonde Phyllis has noble parents who would be proud of their son-in-law? Undoubtedly, she weeps for a royal birth and the harshness of her penates. No, she whom you have loved is not of vile blood; so faithful and disinterested as she is, she could not have been born of a mother for whom she would have had to blush. If I praise her arms, her face and her limbs, my heart is not in it. Do not become suspicious of a friend whose eighth lustrum time is hastening to a close." Horace, at forty years, was no less sensually curious than he was at twenty. After what he had seen of Phyllis, he was secretly impatient for another undisturbed glimpse of so charming a girl. The care which he took, in his ode to Xanthias, to proclaim his lack of interest would seem to prove the contrary. And it is probable that Phyllis was grateful to him for having contributed to her enfranchisement. This enfranchisement delivered her from Xanthias, whom she did not love, and, once mistress of herself, she fell head over heels in love with Telephus, whom Horace already had for a rival. Telephus did not remain attached to her for long, but yielded his place to Horace, who addressed a consoling ode to the blonde Phyllis, by way of inviting her to come and celebrate with him, in one of his villas, the Ides of April, the month sacred to the Venus of the Sea: "Telephus whom you desire was not born for you; young, voluptuous and rich, he is the property of another, who holds him in a gentle slavery, like Phaëton, struck with a thunderbolt, and Bellerophon, whom Pegasus, impatient of a human bridle, cast down upon the earth: this example should serve to repress hopes which are too ambitious. Do not look above you but, dreading to hope too high, seek only your equal. Come, O my last love, for after you, I shall not burn for any other. Learn airs which your adorable voice shall repeat for me: songs which shall charm away my dark disappointments." Phyllis had become a courtesan, and her talent as an *auletris* won distinction for her among the singers who were praised at the feasts; although Horace called her his last love (*meorum finis amorum*), he gave her yet one more preferred rival.

Glycera was the one whom he had loved next; he knew her through

Tibullus, who had loved her before him, or rather, she had been as much of a sweetheart to the other poet as she could be to anyone: Horace could not rest until he had replaced Tibullus in her affections, Tibullus, or rather the youth who was Tibullus' successor. "Do not be so sad, Alvius, at remembering Glycera's cruelty," he wrote to his friend Tibullus. "Must you sigh forth eternal elegies because a younger man has eclipsed you in the eyes of a faithless one?" Horace was rich enough and amiable enough to make it worth Glycera's while to wink at his gray hair, hidden under a wreath of roses; she accepted the gifts and the worship that Horace gave her; she made appointments with him in a charming house, where she had set up the capital of her amorous empire; Horace sent her this note at the moment she was making her toilet amid her *ancillae* and her *ornatrices*, preparatory to receiving her new lover: "O Venus, queen of Cnidos and of Paphos, disdain your cherished sojourn at Cyprus; come to the brilliant house of Glycera, who summons you with clouds of incense; bring with you warmest Love, the Graces with knotted girdles, and the Nymphs, and Mercury, and Youth, which without you holds no more charms!" This Glycera possessed all the characteristics of a consummate courtesan; she exercised an irresistible influence over Horace's sensual life, and the poet gave himself to the ardors of his new passion with transports so fervent that his health was impaired, the irritability of his nerves being increased by these excesses. He fell then into spasmodic crises, which exhausted him even more than did his amorous ecstasies; and often upon leaving his mistress' arms, he would abandon himself to gloomy reveries, inspired by a sort of black malady which had been produced in him by jealousy, and which jealousy threatened to aggravate every day. But this jealousy had been so often unfortunate for him in his amours that he made a violent effort to hide it, and, in the effort, would often grow dizzy in the midst of feasts. "I think I am losing my reason," he said to his ancient rival, Telephus, who had become his friend and table-companion. "Where are the flutes of Berecynthe? Why is that hautboy suspended near the mute lyre? I hate idle hands: strew roses! Let the noise of our madness awake the incensed Lycus and the young neighbor so ill-treated by her old spouse. Your black hair, O Telephus, your eyes, gentle and brilliant as the evening star, still draw the amorous Rhoda, while I languish, I burn for my Glycera . . ." In alluding to Telephus' verdant youth, Horace was alluding

sadly to his own forty-three years, his graying hair, his bald head, his reddened eyes, his wrinkles, and his yellow complexion. Glycera, clever courtesan that she was, still avoided evoking unpleasant thoughts; and sometimes Horace, seated or rather couched at table with her, would believe that he had lost nothing more than his taste for wine in growing old. Then, poet that he was, he would grow warm and become young again in singing of Glycera: "The son of Jupiter and of Semele, the voluptuous Desires and their cruel mother, command me to give my heart to love, which I had thought was ended for me; I burn for Glycera! I love the glow of her skin, brilliant and pure as Parian marble; I love her charming whims and the perilous vivacity of her glances; Venus pursues me and fastens herself upon me; in place of singing of the savage tribes of Scythia and the Parthian knight, who is so redoubtable as he flees, my lyre has nothing left but songs of love. Slaves, place upon the altar a green gauze, the vervain, incense and a goblet of wine: the blood of a victim shall disarm the goddess." Commentators have been very much concerned with this sacrifice, and they have not agreed as to the goddess to whom Horace desired to make his offering. It was Venus, according to some; it was Glycera apotheosized, according to others. There has been much debate on another point, equally difficult to clear up; who was the victim whom the poet proposed to immolate (*mactata hostia*)? The learned Dacier has assumed that the Greeks and Romans never defiled themselves with the blood of sacrifices offered to Venus. In response to this learned argument, Horace's latest biographer has cited a passage of Tacitus, according to which there can be no doubt that the altars of Venus were stained with blood like those of the other gods and goddesses; care merely was taken that the animals sacrificed, she-goats, heifers, and doves, should not be males. The sacrifice which is referred to in Horace's ode to Glycera might well have been of a more erotic sort, for a lover who was familiar with evil spells, and who desired above all a guaranty against the knot of impotence, might burn incense and vervain on the altars of his lares, spill a saucer of wine on the flame and then transform his mistress into a sacrificial victim for Venus.

During his liaison with Glycera, Horace became involved in relentless quarrels with a number of mistresses whom he had had, and who had counted upon remaining his friends. We may suppose, with reason, that it was at Glycera's instigation that he showed no

further favors to Chloris, nor to Pholoë nor to Chloë nor even to his dear Lydia. He outraged, in his verses, those whom he had hymned before with the greatest tenderness. It is impossible not to recognize Glycera's hatred for Lydia in this insulting ode: "The young debauchees come less frequently to beat with fearless blows upon your window and to disturb your sleep; your door remains chained to the threshold, that door which turns so easily upon its hinges. Already, you hear less and less this refrain: 'While I watch through the long nights, Lydia, you are asleep!' Soon, old and withered, at the corner of a solitary street, you, in turn, shall weep for the disdain of your vilest lovers. When burning desires and that heat which causes mares to rut shall be kindled once more in your ulcerated heart, you shall groan to think of that joyous youth-time, wreathed with myrtle and with verdant ivy." Horace, who had the audacity to insult Lydia and to picture her as a street-corner prostitute, soliciting passers-by—Horace did not experience the least remorse in sacrificing to some resentment on Glycera's part the aged Chloris and her daughter Pholoë, who was then one of the fashionable *famosae*. "Wife of the impoverished Ibicus, put an end to your debaucheries and your infamous labors. When you are so near to death, cease to play among the young girls and to cast a shadow among those white stars. What sits well enough with Pholoë no longer sits with you, O Chloris! Let your daughter, like a Bacchante, excited by the sound of the cymbals, besiege the houses of young Romans; let her, in her love for Nothus, run wild like a lascivious nanny-goat; as for you, old lady, it is the fleeces of Luceria and not citharas which are becoming to you. Not the rose with its purpling colors: from a barrel of wine, one does not drain the lees." Horace, in place of tearing a few pages from his book of Odes, added to it many bitter, many cruel ones which, however, could not efface the love-songs of his youth. He was forty-seven years old; he was foolishly enamored of Glycera, and in publishing his collected Odes, he arranged them in such a manner that the public might not be able to retrieve the chronological sequence of his mistresses and his amours in these verse fragments, which he had composed to immortalize those same mistresses; but Glycera was not yet satisfied with the place which the poet had reserved for her in this collection; she was irritated, and dismissed her too easy-going lover; and although the latter wished to get back into her good graces, she was unable to pardon the imaginary wrongs he had done her.



Horace vainly endeavored to inspire her with jealousy; and to prove to her that he could do without her, he turned to a former mistress, whom at least he had not insulted; he spared nothing in his efforts to become this woman's lover once more. This mistress was Chloë, that beautiful Thracian slave, whom he had been the first to possess, and who had not been able to hold him with her naïve and childish graces. The blonde Chloë had acquired experience, and had become a fashionable courtesan; she was, at this time, at the height of her reputation; she kept about her a brilliant court of admirers; she was to be seen with them everywhere, on the promenade, in the theatre, in the baths, at the seaside; her luxuries surpassed those of her rivals, and yet, her sole support was a young merchant named Gyges. This Gyges she undoubtedly loved, for the reason that he had no equal in beauty, but she was attached to him most of all on account of his fortune. They lived together as man and wife till Gyges encountered another courtesan called Asteria; he fell in love with her at once and thought no more of anything except breaking with Chloë, who watched over him as over a treasure. He feigned a voyage into Bithynia, where, he said, business called him. He left, promising Asteria that he would not return except to her. As soon as he was gone, his love for Asteria was evidenced by a shower of presents, which increased Chloë's jealousy all the more... Asteria received incessant letters from the traveler; Chloë received none. The latter did not even know in what country Gyges was while Gyges himself was resolved never to return to Rome except with the purpose of never again leaving his Asteria's side. Chloë was beside herself, at once furious and desolate; she learned that Gyges had gone from Bythynia to Epirus, and she sent him there an emissary laden with imploring and passionate letters.

The moment was ill-chosen to make Chloë forget her lover's absence; Horace was repulsed by this beautiful and abandoned creature, who did not spare him her disdain. Horace revenged himself, not only by an epigram against the proud Chloë, but also by taking up the gauntlet for Asteria, whose friend and helper he became. He addressed to her an ode in which he encouraged her to remain faithful to her faithful Gyges and to have no fear of the intrigues of her abandoned rival: "Asteria, take care that your neighbor, Enipeus, does not please you more than he should. No one, it is true, guides a horse on the field of Mars with more adroitness, and none more quickly

breasts, as a swimmer, the waters of the Tiber. Of an evening, close your doors to the sounds of the plaintive flute; do not cast your eyes in the street, and when he calls you, a hundred times cruel, remain inflexible!" He informed her that Chloë's messenger had endeavored in vain to move Gyges' heart, that heart which belonged thereafter to Asteria alone; he might rejoice in Chloë's despair, but the ill success of his amorous efforts with this courtesan had left in his heart a bitter discouragement, and he thought to get justice by invoking Venus one last time, Venus who so often had been favorable to him: "I have rejoiced, times past, in my triumphs over young girls, and I have served, not without glory, under the banner of Love; today, I consecrate to Venus of the Sea my arms and my lyre, which is no longer suited to these combats; I hang them up, at the goddess' left hand, on the walls of her temple. Place there also the torches, the handspikes and the hatchets which threaten closed doors. O goddess, you who reign in the fortunate island of Cyprus and at Memphis, where the Sithonian snows are never known, O sovereign of love, deign only to flick with your divine lash the arrogant Chloë!"

But Horace had said adieu to Venus too soon; he joyfully realized that he might yet have a right to the goddess' favors. He saw, or perhaps saw again, Lyde, the clever singer who played the lyre at the feasts; he was not long in arranging with her an amorous alliance, and he borrowed, certainly, from his purse the chief means of seduction. He first placed his projects under the auspices of Mercury, god of the poets, of thieves and of merchants: "Inspire me," he says to this god of the courtezans, "inspire me with songs which shall captivate the ear of the savage Lyde! As the young mare bounds sportively over the plain and flees the approach of the courser, so does the day flee me and love mocks me once more." But she was not slow in coming to her senses, and she often came to sing at the feasts, while Horace drew from the depths of his vintage urns his skeptic and insouciant philosophy. The odes which he addresses to Lyde are, above all, invitations to a drinking bout: "What could one better do with a day sacred to Neptune? Come, Lyde, bring forth the Cecubum, hidden in the depths of the cellar, and take sobriety in its own trenches . . . We shall sing, in turn: myself, Neptune and the green locks of the Nereïdes; you, on your ivory lyre, shall hymn Latona and the swift arrows of Diana. Our last song shall be for the goddess who reigns at Cnidos and over the glistening Cyclades, and

who flies to Paphos on a chariot drawn by swans. We shall render also to the Night the hymns which are her due." In an ode to Quintus Hirpinus, Horace, whose hair is white but who wreathes his locks with roses, counts still on the songstress Lyde to enlighten the repast where Bacchus dissipates gnawing care: "Slave, see that the ardent Falernian is promptly cooled in that distant spring. And you, put out of Lyde's house the gallant whom she has taken in (*quis devium scortum eliciet domo Lyden*); tell her to make haste. Let her come here with her ivory lyre, her hair negligently knotted in the manner of the women of Sparta."

It is ended. Horace's amorous career ends with Lyde; he does not seek any more the society of courtezans; he does not love women any more: he knows that he no longer possesses anything of what is needed to please them, and so he no longer exposes himself to their disdain and their refusal, but invokes Venus once more: "After a long truce, O Venus, you declare war on me anew! I am no longer what I was under the reign of the good Cinara; I have now counted ten lustra; do not endeavor any more, cruel mother of tender loves, to bend beneath your yoke, hitherto so mild, a heart that has become a rebel! Go where the passionate vows of youth call you; take with you, on the wings of your gleaming swans, your pleasures to the house of Maximus, if you are seeking a heart made for love . . . As for me, goodby to boys, goodby to women, goodby to the credulous hope of a longed-for return! Goodby the combats of wine and the fresh flowers with which I used to love to adorn my head! But alas! Why Ligurinus, why these furtive tears which flow down my cheeks? Why in the midst of speech does my voice die away, silent and embarrassed? Night, in my dreams, it is you whom I embrace; you whom I pursue over the grass of the Field of Mars, cruel one, and down into the waters of the Tiber!" Horace is enamored of the handsome Ligurinus, and this shameful passion fills his last years. And we behold the favorite of courtezans, the poet of the graces and of loves, dishonoring his own white hairs and abandoning himself to the most hideous distractions that Roman Prostitution had to offer.

## CHAPTER XXV

**H**ORACE was barely born when Catullus, that great poet of love or, rather, of sensual pleasure, died at the age of thirty-six years, a victim of the abuse of pleasure, according to some historians, but who, according to others, merely had succumbed to the weakness of his own delicate and sickly constitution, despite the precautions of a calm, chaste life. This life, in any case, had not always been so calm or so chaste, for Catullus' poems, however mutilated and expurgated they have been by the censorship of the first centuries of Christianity, still breathe an erotic license and the Epicurean philosophy. The poet, a friend of Cornelius Nepos and of Cicero, composed his verses in the midst of the libertines and courtezans of Rome; he even speaks their language; in his verses, adorned with all the graces of style, he never recoils before the obscene word, which he utters with a sort of effrontery in the midst of an eloquent and harmonious phrase; he delights in the images and mysteries of the most hardened debauchery, but he has the excuse of being naïve in the things which he dares to say and to depict. It is evident that his travels and his sojourns in Asia, in Greece and in Africa, had left him in ignorance of nothing that went to make up the obscene mosaic of Roman prostitution. And yet, in an epigram against his detractors, the *patiens*\* Aurelius and the *cinaedus*, Furius, who, judging from the poet's voluptuous verses (*molliculi*), had implied that Catullus was none too modest himself, the latter does not hesitate to defend his modesty: "A good poet," he says, "must be chaste; but is it necessary for his verses to be so? They possess enough wit and enough harmony, however voluptuous and far from decent they may be, when they possess the power of awakening the senses, not merely of young lads, but also of those barbarous old men who are no longer able to move their exhausted loins." Catullus was too well instructed in the secrets of Venus not to have acquired that knowledge and that experience at the expense of his health.

He makes us acquainted in his poems, the half of which have not come down to us, with three or four Greek courtezans who were his mistresses and his women friends; they were in the mode in his day

\**Translator's Note*:—As previously explained, a passive homosexual.



(50 to 60 years B.C.), but their reputation, mind, talents and graces, however brilliant they may have been or the time of their amours, did not last long enough for us to find a reflection of it in the works of Horace. There is but Lesbia, whose name, immortalized by Catullus, has survived through the sparrow which she so wept over. According to the commentators, this Lesbia, daughter of a Senator, Metellus Celer, was called Claudia and did not belong to the courtesan class. The poet seems to have avoided, in his verses addressed to Lesbia or to her sparrow, admitting a detail which might have been taken as personal; he does not sketch in the portrait of this beauty; he does not even reveal to us the color of her hair; he limits himself to the enumeration of kisses, the number of which he so confuses that the envious can never count them: "You ask me, Lesbia, how many of your kisses I need in order to have enough and too much? As many grains of sand as there are in Libya, in the deserts of Cyrene, from the temple of Jupiter Ammon to the sacred tomb of the old Battus; as many stars as in the silence of the night are witnesses of the furtive loves of the human species!" This Lesbia, whom Catullus had so nicknamed by allusion to her Lesbian tastes, and whom he compared to Sappho in translating for her the ode of the celebrated philosopher of Lesbos, is better known through her sparrow than by reason of her gallant manners. Of this sparrow Lesbia was especially fond; she loved to play with it and to hide it in her bosom, she loved to tease it with her finger and to provoke it to bite her while she was waiting for her lovers, which was for her a means of killing boredom. This sparrow, the death of which Catullus hymned, was not a bird, according to tradition handed down by scholiasts; it was a young girl, Lesbia's companion, whom Lesbia loved as much as she did her lover. "Weep O Graces, weep, Loves, and all you who are beautiful among men! It is dead, my mistress' sparrow, that sparrow which was her delight, and which she loved more than the light of her own eyes!" But Catullus' scholiasts have, perhaps, abused the privileges of an interpreter, by basing their interpretations upon the beautiful imitation of Sappho's ode which the poet did not hesitate to dedicate to Lesbia. We will not argue, against this view, that Catullus intended merely to mourn for a sparrow: "O miserable sparrow! this is your work: the eyes of my mistress are inflamed and red from weeping."

Catullus was so passionately taken with Lesbia that he did not

foresee where that passion, which she thus shared with him, would lead: "Let us live, O my Lesbia!" he cried, "let us live and love!" But the young girl, although better loved than any will ever be again, was the first to tire of love, and dismissed her lover. The latter did not endeavor to recapture that heart from which he had been ejected; he did not weep over the rupture, which he looked upon as being inevitable; he resolved merely to forget Lesbia, and not to love in the future with the same self-abnegation: "Adieu, Lesbia!" he sorrowfully says; "already Catullus has hardened his heart; he will not pursue you any more, he will not supplicate you any more; but you, you, faithless one, shall weep when the nights shall pass with no one to address prayers to you. What fate is reserved for you now? Who will seek you out? To whom shall you appear beautiful? Who will love you? Whose will you be? Who shall have your kisses? What lips will you bite? And you, Catullus, since it is the will of destiny, harden yourself!" Catullus soon perceived that he had counted too much upon his strength of mind, and that he was not to be comforted for Lesbia's inconstancy; he loved her absent; he loved her always; amid a hundred other mistresses: "O, gods!" he murmured, drying his tears, "if your divine nature permits you pity, and if ever you have borne succor to poor wretches in the agony of death, look upon my misery, and, in return for a pure life, take away from me this evil, this poison, which, gliding like a torpor into the marrow of my bones, has driven all joy from my heart!" For a long time after, he could not think without emotion of his love and of her who had inspired it; he grew indignant one day at hearing Lesbia compared to Mamurra's mistress who possessed neither the little nose, the well-made foot, the black eyes, the long fingers, the soft skin nor the seductive voice of the true Lesbia: "Oh gross and stupid century!" he repeated sighing.

Lesbia was married, or rather, she had formed one of those concubine liaisons which the Roman law included in the category of marriage by *usucapio*. She lived with a man who was called her husband (*maritus*), and who was, perhaps, but a jealous master. She sometimes saw Catullus in the presence of this husband, whom she dared not deceive, although she would well have liked to do so. In order better to feign forgetfulness of the past and confer peace of mind upon her husband, whom she secretly regretted having preferred to her lover, she would address, in a loud tone of voice, reproaches

and even insults to Catullus: "This is a great joy for that imbecile!" says the poet, who consoles himself by composing an epigram directed at the husband. "Ass, you understand nothing! If she were silent and forgot our love, that would be a sign she was cured of it; when she grumbles and hurls invectives at me, it means not only that she remembers, but also, which is far more serious, that she is irritated; it means that she is still burning and cannot hide it!" And yet, one does not glean from Catullus' poems any more positive proofs than this of the passion which she had for him. If it was an illusion, he did nothing to shatter it, but contented himself with gazing upon Lesbia, without any attempt to render her unfaithful to her husband; One day, at the theater, a murmur of admiration greeted the arrival of a courtesan named Quintia, who came to take her place on the seats near Lesbia, as though to eclipse the latter and vanquish her beauty; all eyes, the truth is, were fixed on the newcomer, and no one looked at Lesbia, except Catullus, who had eyes only for her. Indignant over the unjust preference which the people accorded to Quintia, he took his tablets and improvised this piece of verse, which he circulated among the spectators by way of avenging Lesbia: "Quintia is beautiful for the majority; for me she is pale, lean and lanky. I will readily confess that she has a few advantages, but I deny absolutely that she is beautiful, for in that huge carcass there is neither grace nor attractiveness. Lesbia, on the contrary, is beautiful, and so beautiful from head to foot that she seems to have snatched from others all the graces."

*Lesbia formosa est; quae quum pulcherrima tota est,  
Tum omnibus una omnes surripuit vneres.*

One might say that Catullus, in his poems, has given this Lesbia no rival, for he did not cease to love her after he had ceased to possess her. One might say that his muse would have blushed to utter the name of another mistress. We find but a single name, that of Ipsithilla, which shines for a moment beside that of Lesbia, and which disappears like a meteor after a day of amorous folly. This Ipsithilla, was, to judge from her name, a Greek courtesan, and in order to reproduce in our language the gallant note which Catullus sent her one day, we must make use of nothing less than the discreet translation of a university professor: "In the name of love, gentle Ipsithilla, my delight, charm of my life, accord me the rendezvous which

I implore for the middle of the day; and if you do accord me this, add this favor, that the door may be barred to all the world. Above all, do not go out! . . . Stay in the house and prepare yourself to see me renew nine times my amorous exploits (*paesque nobis novem continuas futationes*). But if you say yes, say it at once; for, extended upon my couch after a good dinner, I am milling in my ardor and my tunic and my bedcovers." This epigram, which explains to us why Catullus died so young, is the only one in which he mentions by name one of his mistresses. In another epigram, which he addresses to the inmates of a bad house, he complains bitterly of the loss of a mistress whom he does not name, whom he had loved as one had never loved before, and for whom he had done battle many times. This woman had left him in order to take refuge in a house of debauchery, the ninth house one came to on leaving the temple of Castor and Pollux. There, she prostituted herself indifferently to the ignoble guests of this lupanar (*omnes pusilli, et semitarii moechi*), who kept a guard over their prey, and who did not permit Catullus to enter the house, where the inmates were about a hundred in number: "Do you think you are the only men," he cries to them wrathfully (*solis putatis esse mentulas vobis?*) "Do they think that they alone have the right to frequent public women and to look upon the rest of the world as castrates?" He defies them, he threatens to write of the violence which has been done him on the very walls of the evil place, in which they refuse to give him what they were in the habit of giving everyone for a certain price in silver. He is near to measuring his strength with two hundred adversaries. But all he can do is to keep on insisting, crying and praying, while listening to his sweetheart's voice, while she is giving herself to the *contubernales*.\* He stands at the door, shivering, all night long.

Surely, we are not to recognize Lesbia in the heroine of these debaucheries, in the scandalous hostess of this ill-famed tavern. Lesbia's husband, that Lesbius whom Catullus treats with so much contempt, may have sold her for this purpose; but he would not have permitted her to sink to this degree of degradation. Catullus well might inform Lesbia that he esteemed her less, but he was forced to confess by signs that he loved her still: *Amentem injuria talis cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus*. He continued, however, to lead his life in the company of courtezans, and he was, frequently, the

\*Translator's Note:—Inmates, literally, *tent-companions*.



victim of their deceits; thus we see him highly irritated against a certain Aufilena, who had demanded of him in advance the price of favors which she had afterward refused him: "Honor demands, Aufilena, that one keep one's word, even as modesty demands that you promise me nothing; but to steal by deceiving is still worse than the act of an avaricious courtesan who prostitutes herself to all comers." In addition, he is indignant with the shameful prostitute who has robbed him of his tablets; he calls her a *stinking strumpet* (*pudida moecha*); he loads her with insults, without obtaining the restitution of his tablets; she is unmoved and only laughs; he ends by laughing himself, and by changing his tactics. "Chaste and pure young girl," he says to her, "give me back my tablets." Catullus felt himself at the end of his physical strength; barely thirty-four, he was on the verge of decrepitude; he had to renounce all the pleasures which had brought him, in so short a time, to a premature old age; but he did not renounce Lesbia. She was no more than a memory with which he rediscovered the pleasures of his ardent youth; it was still of love that he sang, in tender or passionate verses; sometimes he would curse Lesbia, even going so far as to insult her; then, at once, as though to obtain her pardon, he would admire, exalt and invoke her in the manner of a divinity; "No woman can say that she is so tenderly loved as you were by me, O my Lesbia! Never has the faith of treaties been more religiously preserved than were our oaths of love by me! But look where you have led me through your fault, and what a sacrifice has been demanded of my fidelity! . . . for I never again could respect you, though you were to become the most virtuous of women, nor could I cease to love you if you were to become the most debauched!" The senses were silent in Catullus; the heart alone spoke, and this supreme tribunal still found its home in Lesbia. The latter learned that her former lover had but a little while to live; she believed that disappointment was all that was the matter with him, and wished to cure him; she came to him with open arms, and Catullus threw himself into those arms, forgetful of everything else. Lesbia had revived the dead; Catullus was resurrected, to write with a trembling hand these admirable verses:

*Restituis cupido, atque insperanti ipsa refers te  
Nobis, O lucem candidiore notâ!  
Quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis haec quid  
Optandum vita, dicere quis poterit!*

"You give yourself to me, who desire you so! You come back to me who hoped for you unceasingly; O day which must be marked with the whitest stone! Who then is happier than I upon the earth, and who could say that there is in life anything preferable to such happiness?"\* Catullus had nothing but his verses with which to express his joy and his appreciation; his dim eye lighted up, an unaccustomed flush glowed on his hollow cheeks, furrowed with tears; he pressed to his bosom this cherished mistress, who wept as she gazed upon him; he breathed his last sigh in those verses in which he flattered himself that he was to go on living and loving Lesbia: "So you promise me, O life of mine, that our life shall be full of charm and shall last forever? Great gods! May she only promise and keep her promise, and may what she says to me be said sincerely and from the heart! Thus, we may make last as long as our life this sacred bond of an eternal friendship!" Of what sort could these courtezans have been who knew how to cause themselves to be loved with so exquisite a delicacy, with a devotion that was almost religious! Catullus died at thirty-six, happy at having found his Lesbia again (56 B.C.). The finest praise that could be given this Lesbia is to recall the love, so tender and so constant, which she inspired in the libertine poet, who respects her always in the verses which he addresses to her, and who does not fear, moreover, to take his muse down into the mysterious mire of Roman prostitution.

Propertius was born before Catullus had died. Propertius, who must also have been, according to the quaint expression of a certain rhetorician, "One of the triumvirs of love," first saw the day in Etruria, in the city of Perugia or in Mevania\*\* in the year 702 of Rome, 52 B.C. Propertius became a poet by reading the poems of Catullus; he had become a lover by seeing Cynthia. The true name of this beauty was Hostia, or Hostilia. Her flatterers even pretended that she was a descendent of Tullus Hostilius, the third king of Rome; but however this may have been, she could boast, with certitude, of being the direct descendent of her father Hostilius, a scholarly writer who composed a history of the war in Istria. This Hostilia, whose beauty, graces and talents had given her a place among the most remarkable women of her time, was, nevertheless,

\**Translator's Note*:—In such cases as this, throughout, it is Lacroix' translation that is translated.

\*\**Translator's Note*:—Mevania was in Umbria.

nothing more than a courtesan. She truly loved Propertius, but she had no scruples about giving him as many rivals as she was able to satisfy. She was careful not to permit him to enjoy the same liberty on his side; she even prescribed for him the most rigorous fidelity. Nevertheless, she lived publicly with a rich praetor of Illyria, named Statilius Taurus, who had built at his own expense an amphitheater, and who spent as much money upon her as he did upon his wild-beast combats. Propertius, who did not grow rich from his poetry, would have been at some pains to provide for the prodigalities of his Delia; he accordingly and of necessity put up with the competition not greatly to be feared, of the praetor of Illyria. He closed his eyes and ears, from habit, each time that he might hear of this permanent rival; but he would suffer no others; or at least, he would make a bad face at those who shared, in passing, the favors of his mistress. Thus upon coming home one evening unexpectedly from Mevania, impatient to be once again in his mistress' arms, he heard the sounds of a flute, and saw the house gleaming with lights. He drew near with some anxiety and entered in a state of stupefaction; the slaves hid when they saw him coming; none dared to stop him, although all wanted to prevent his going further; there was a banquet in the *triclinium* with dancing and song and the odor of aromatic spices. The poet summoned a freed man, who did not respond. He seized by the ears a slave, Lygdamus, who was attempting to flee; he demanded to know, in an imperious voice, who was the magnificent guest who was receiving such a welcome in Cynthia's house. Was it a consul? Was it a senator? Was it an actor, a gladiator or a eunuch? Lygdamus kept silent; he would have parted with his two ears rather than open his mouth; but Propertius had other business; he went directly to the *triclinium*, drew the curtains and darted a glance into the festal hall, where the odor of food and spices revealed to him what was going on. As a matter of fact, before a sumptuously laden table there stood a couch of ivory, purple and silver, and on the same cushions were Hostilia and Statilius Taurus, embracing and smiling at each other. At this sight, he grew calm and grave; he dropped the curtain and retired with tranquil step: "Fool!" he said to Lygdamus, who still feared for his ears, "why did you not tell me at once that the praetor had arrived from Illyria?" He returned to his own house and spent the night, which he had reserved for more pleasant employment, in commerce with the Muses, the only infidelity

which he permitted himself with respect to his unfaithful one. The following day, he sent Hostilia an elegy, which began thus: "So he has come back from Illyria, that praetor, your rich prey, Cynthia, and my greatest despair! Why has he not left his life amid the Acroceraunian rocks? Ah! Neptune, what offerings I should have given you then! . . . Today, and without me they feast at a full table, and all the night, except for me alone, your door is open. Yes, if you are wise, do not abandon for a moment that harvest which is proffered you, but fleece of all his wool that stupid sheep. Afterwards, when his riches are gone, he will remain poor and without resources, and then tell him to take sail for other Illyrias." Such advice on the part of a lover did not evidence an extreme delicacy.

Cynthia was not only beautiful; her lover called her *learned*, and spoke many times of her education, of her mind and of her talents; it is known, also, that she was a poet, and her taste for poetry must have been the principal bond between the two. Propertius, as a matter of fact, could only repay her in verses. In his elegies, he often sketches in the portrait of this distinguished courtesan; he informs us that she had a majestic figure, blond hair and an admirable hand. "Ah! her attractions," he cries to a friend, "are the least of nourishment to my flame. O, Bassus; she has many other perfections, for which I would even give my life: there is her ingenuous blush; there is her brilliancy and myriad talents; there are those delicious pleasures concealed under her discreet robe (*gaudia sub tacitâ ducere veste libet*)." He found his Cynthia sufficiently perfect to be able to dispense with her toilet and even her veil, when he had the happiness to possess her by day or night: "Dear heart," he cries to her in a transport, "why display so many ornaments in your hair? Why that myrrh of Orontes which you scatter over your head? Why so much care to give the proper swing to the folds of that thin robe, woven in the Isle of Cos? Why sell yourself to the lust of these barbarians? Why, under an attire so dearly bought, stifle the beauties of nature and prevent your charms from shining out with their own beauty? Believe me, you are too beautiful to resort to such artifices. Love is nude; he does not love such stratagems." Propertius' attitude was always that of a tender and sensible lover: "A girl who pleases one man is well enough adorned." But Cynthia was obstinate about preserving, in the most intimate tête-à-tête, the annoying paraphernalia of clothes and jewels. Propertius, in initiating us into the myst-



eries of an amorous night, complains bitterly of this habit, due to modesty or to prudery, which he might have explained by the discovery of some deformity or some hidden imperfection; he depicts Cynthia as incessantly drawing her tunic over her bosom even though the lamp had been put out: "Of what use is it," he would say to her, "to condemn Venus to do battle in the darkness? If you do not know it, the eyes are our guides in love. It was naked, and as she came forth from the couch of Menelaus, that Helen, at Sparta, kindled in Paris' heart the fire that consumed him; it was nude that Endymion captivated Artemis; it was nude also that the goddess slept with him (*nudae concubuisse deae*). If, then, you persist in sleeping clad, you shall see whether or not my hands are clever at picking a tunic to pieces. What is more, if you make me angry enough, you will be showing your mother tomorrow your bruised arms. . . . Is it that your pendulous throat restrains you from giving yourself to these nude sports? That might be, if you were ashamed of showing the traces of maternity." Cynthia took no account of these fine reasonings, and Propertius was forced to be content with what she offered: "If she will only give me a few nights like those," he exclaimed intoxicatedly, "my life shall be a long one in a single year; if she gives me many others, I, in those nights, shall believe myself immortal. In one night, each of us may become a god!"

This love, however, was not without its clouds. Cynthia had to ply her trade each day; for without counting the praetor of Illyria, she had other gallants who helped pay for the upkeep of her home. She did not, therefore, bestow upon Propertius all the favors which he claimed by right of being her avowed lover; she frequently kept him in the discard; she would close her door to him, at least of a night; for her nights belonged to mercenary love; but she would cover as far as possible with respectable pretexts the disreputable truth, which wounded the poet to the quick; she would blame upon the festivals of Isis, Juno or some other goddess the continence which she imposed, regretfully she said: "And now have come again those dismal solemnities of Isis," wrote Propertius one day. "Already, Cynthia has passed ten nights far from me! Perish the daughter of Inachus, who, from the slothful banks of the Nile, has transmitted her mysteries to the matrons of Ausonia, she who so often separates two lovers who are eager to be joined! Whoever this goddess was, she has always been fatal to love!" Propertius did not doubt that

Isis alone was to blame for the scruples and the refusals of Cynthia, whom he endeavored to propitiate by saying to her: "Certainly no woman enters with pleasure her solitary bed; there is something which love forces you to wish for. Passion is always more lively in the case of absent lovers; prolonged pleasure always becomes a bore to too assiduous lovers." Cynthia lets him talk on and changes nothing of her way of life. Not only did she reserve for Propertius' rivals the nights which she pretended to give to Isis, but she even spent a portion of her nights in drinking, singing and playing dice. But Propertius could not have been in ignorance of why his mistress was so opulent; and since he did not possess the treasures of Attalus to pay for this luxury, the obscene source of which he knew, he was reduced to the necessity of sighing, in the most poetic fashion in the world: "Did Corinth ever see, in the house of Laïs, such affluence, when all Greece was sighing at her door! Was there ever a court more numerous around the feet of Thaïs, dramatized by Menander, and who so long enlivened the leisure of the people of Erichthea! That Phryne, who might have raised Thebes from her ashes, did she have the joy of counting more admirers! No, O Cynthia, you surpass them all, and what is more, you give yourself a family-tree to suit your fancy, by way of legitimatizing those kisses which you are so afraid of lacking!" These reproaches, sufficiently obscure, signify undoubtedly that Cynthia passed off her lovers, whom she received with the most touching hospitality, as her relations; but Propertius was so jealous of her that he sometimes suspected her of hiding a lover under her robe (*et miser in tunicâ suspicor esse virum*).

It was not merely at Rome that Cynthia gathered about her this throng of suitors, all more or less smitten and more or less generous; it was also at Baiae, where she kept her court during the season. The citizens of Baiae beheld then as their guests the *élite* among the rich, the corrupt and the pleasure-seeking. The Greek courtezans of renown would have looked upon themselves as out of it if they had not paraded their insolent luxury amid the orgies which took place in this city of lights; they came there to look for new intrigues and fresh profits. Propertius was, then, jealous of Baiae as he would have been of ten rivals at one and the same time: "O Cynthia! have you any thought of me?" he wrote to her during her absences, when he fed on nothing but memories of the past and hopes for the future. "Do you recall the nights that we have spent together? What is the

place which I still keep in your heart? Perhaps, at this moment, an enemy and a rival is wishing that I would erase your name from my verses." Propertius, who had not the right, nor perhaps the means, to join his mistress at Baiae was indignant over this corrupt place, over those sands which witnessed so many amorous encounters, over that reef for feminine chastity. "Ah! May they perish forever," he cried, "may Baiae and its waters perish, which engender all the crimes of love!" In addition, he could no longer delude himself as to the object of this voyage to Baiae; he was not unaware that Cynthia had no other revenue than that of her charms; he knew this, because he had seen her at work: "Cynthia does not seek Fasces," he published abroad in a moment of bitterness, "she does not care for honors; it is always the purse of lovers that she weighs . . . thus, then, one may make a traffic of love! O Jupiter! O Infamy! and our young women grow old by this traffic! My mistress sends me unceasingly to seek pearls for her in the seas; she commands me to go pilfer for her at Tyre! Oh! I would to the gods that no one at Rome was rich!" It happens that at the time Propertius was letting himself be carried away by this excess of bad humor, Cynthia, busy with her villainous praetor, had forbidden him her couch for seven consecutive nights.

Cynthia had been Propertius' first mistress; he swore to her that she should be the last. One must believe, as a matter of fact, that he for a long time, and vainly, set her an example of constancy. He asserts in a number of passages in his elegies, that he had remained faithful to this charmingly unfaithful creature, and we have seen that he pardoned her everything, as soon as she permitted him to enter her couch once more, where, the night before, another had reigned in his stead; he deludes himself so little in this respect that he says to her, even while he embraces her: "You wicked creature, you cannot sleep a single night alone, nor pass alone a single day!" There were many quarrels, many separations, which would end in reconciliation and a renewing of the vows of love. Propertius, the severe Propertius, made up his mind to forget Cynthia by hurling himself like a lost soul into debauchery, by frequenting the most accessible courtezans; he had lost his native modesty during one of these lovers' quarrels, the day his friend, Gallus, with the intention of distracting him, had made him the witness for one whole night of his own amours with a new mistress: "O night, the memory of which is so sweet to me!" the poet had exclaimed, electrified by

this spectacle, "O night, which I shall often evoke in my ardent vows, that voluptuous night, when I saw you, Gallus, pressing in your arms your young mistress and dying of love as you whispered broken words to her!" Following this dangerous session, Propertius became unfaithful to Cynthia. He did not dream of giving her a rival chosen from among the matrons; he was too concerned with his own peace of mind to desire anything but easy pleasures. And so he set himself, as he himself says, to follow the paths beaten by the herd and to quench his thirst with long draughts at the polluted spring of public Prostitution (*Ipsa petita lacu nunc mihi dulcis aqua est*). He now adopted a maxim quite contrary to that of love: "Woe to those who like to besiege a closed door!" He was resolved to love no more, never again to abdicate his liberty: "Let all the daughters whom the Orontes and the Euphrates appear to have sent to Rome for me, let these sirens make the best of me!" And yet, he could not console himself for having abandoned Cynthia, and he continued to hymn her, even while he cursed her: "Never shall old age part me from my love," he softly murmured, "when I ought to be a Tithonus or a Nestor!" He learned, suddenly, that Cynthia had fallen ill; he ran to her and would not leave her bedside, but nursed her so tenderly that it seemed he had snatched her from the very jaws of death. When she was convalescent: "O light of my life," he said to her, "since you are out of danger, bear your offerings to the altars of Diana! Pay homage, also, to the goddess who was changed into a heifer (Io): ten nights of absence for the goddess and ten of love for me!"

Following this reconciliation, the lovers changed rôles; jealousy was calmed in Propertius' heart, only to flare up in Cynthia's. He had been freed at last. Acanthis, the procuress, who had so much influence over Cynthia, who procured for the latter perfumes, philtres and cosmetics, who bore the courtesan's messages, and who was also the born protectress of wealthy admirers and the implacable enemy of a disinherited poet—Acanthis, that terrible Megara, had given up the ghost in a fit of coughing; she was no longer on the spot, this infamous counsellor, to say to Cynthia: "Let your porter keep a watch for those who bring something; if anyone knocks with empty hands, let the porter sleep as though he were deaf, with his forehead leaning against the closed lock. Do not repel the callous hand of the sailor, if it is filled with gold, nor the rude caresses of the soldier who pays, nor even those of barbarous slaves, who, with a sign sus-



pended about their neck, gambol in the market place. Look at the gold and not at the hand which gives it. What will remain of the songs he sings you? Be deaf to those verses which are not accompanied by a present of splendid silks, to that lyre whose melodies are not mingled with the sound of gold." Propertius was present at Acanthis' death, which brought into evidence the fillets which bound her sparse hair, her mitre, discolored and covered with filth, her she-dog, so well trained to keep watch at the door of courtezans: "Let an old wine-jar with a broken neck be the cinerary urn of this abominable sorceress," cried Propertius, "and let a wild fig tree strangle her in its roots! Let each lover come to assail her tomb with stones, and let the stones be accompanied with maledictions!" Cynthia, who no longer had Acanthis' malicious voice to listen to, gave free rein to her fondness for Propertius, and, at the same time, to her jealousy. She had him spied upon and spied upon him herself; she accused him of wrongs which he had not dreamed of doing her, and supposed that he had as many mistresses as she had lovers. Propertius, in vain, protested his innocence. She heaped reproaches and insults upon him; she bit him, she beat him, she scratched him, and ended by making a martyr of herself, as though to punish herself for not being sufficiently beautiful or sufficiently loved.

This vague jealousy settled upon a courtesan named Lycinna, whose lover Propertius had been before becoming Cynthia's. Cynthia soon worked herself up into such a fury against the poor Lycinna that Propertius was obliged to implore her to make peace with this ancient rival, who had given her no cause for reproach; he confessed that he had had, in his youth, a few relations with this Lycinna, but that he barely remembered having known her, although Lycinna had taught him, in those nights of love, a science which was only too familiar to him: "Your love, my Cynthia," he said without convincing her, "has been the tomb of all my other lovers! . . . Cease, then, your persecutions of Lycinna, who has done nothing to deserve them. When your resentment, O women, is given free rein, it never comes back!" Propertius, in order to obtain that peace which was so necessary for his intellectual labors, avoided doing anything that Cynthia might interpret in a jealous sense; but since he had ceased to be jealous himself, he naturally had an indifferent air, and his mistress was all the more eager to discover the causes of this indifference. One day, she pretended that she had made a vow to offer a

sacrifice to Juno of Argos in the temple at Lanuvium. This temple was situated on the right of the Via Appia, not far from the walls of Rome; in the sacred grove which surrounded the temple, there was a deep cave which served as a retreat to a dragon, to which virgins each year brought offerings of wheat-cakes, which they would present with their eyes covered; if they were pure, the monster would accept their offerings; if not, he rejected them with frightful hisses. Cynthia had nothing to bear to this dragon; she could only have business with the goddess. Her trip was, moreover, but a manner of absenting herself, leaving the field free to her lover. Propertius saw her depart in a chariot drawn by mules with long manes, led by an effeminate with a shaved face and preceded by Molossi\* with rich collars. "After so many outrages done to my couch," says the poet, in relating his adventures, "I desired, by changing my bed, to pitch camp in another territory." He sent word then to two joyous courtezans, Phyllis, not very seductive on an empty stomach, but charming enough when she had had a little to drink, and Teia, white as a lily, but who when drunk could not be content with a single lover. The first dwelt upon the Aventine hill, near the temple of Diana; the second in the groves of the Capitoline. They both came to the Esquiline quarter, where Propertius' little house was situated. Everything had been prepared to receive them in a worthy manner. Propertius thought thus to forget his troubles and revive his senses by means of pleasures which were unknown to him (*et venere ignotâ furta novare mea*).

The feast was served on the grass at the bottom of the garden; nothing was lacking, neither wine of Methymna nor aromatic spices nor ice-cold potions nor roses in leaf; Lygdamus presided over the bottles. There was but one couch at the table, but it was large enough to accommodate three guests. Propertius seated himself between his two guests. An Egyptian was playing the flute, Phyllis played the castanets, a deformed dwarf made music on a flageolet. But this music only increased the poet's distraction; for he, in his thoughts, was following Cynthia to the temple of Lanuvium. Phyllis and Teia, however, were drunk, and the lamps had flickered low; and so, they pushed aside the table to play at dice. Propertius shook only unlucky numbers, those that were called *the dogs*; chance did not deign to let him make the throw of Venus, that is to say, the

\**Translator's Note*:—A people of the eastern part of Epirus.

number one. Phyllis had bared her throat, and Teia had drawn up her tunic, while Propertius was blind and deaf to all (*cantabant surdo, nudabant pectora caeco*). Of a sudden, the front door creaked on its hinges, and light steps sounded in the vestibule. It was Cynthia, who came running forward, pale, her hair in disorder, her fists clenched and her eyes gleaming; and one might have said it was a city being taken by assault (*spectaculum captâ nec minus urbe fuit*). With a furious hand, she hurled the lamp into Phyllis' face; Teia, thoroughly frightened, cried fire and called for water; Cynthia pursued them, tore off their robes, pulled their hair, struck them and heaped injury upon them. They barely escaped and took refuge in the first tavern they found. This noise, however, had awakened the whole quarter. The people came running with torches; Cynthia was to be seen, like a mad Bacchante, belaboring Propertius, slapping him and biting him until the blood came, and endeavoring to scratch out his eyes. Propertius, who felt that he was to blame, accepted punishment with a secret joy; he embraced Cynthia's knees, begging her pardon and beseeching her to be calm; she forgave him, on condition that he would not walk out any more, richly clad, under Pompey's Portico or in the Forum, that he would not again turn his glances toward the last rows of seats in the amphitheater where the courtezans sat, and that his Lygdamus should be sold as a faithless slave, his feet laden with a double chain. Propertius consented to everything in order to expiate his impotent attempt at infidelity; he kissed the hands of his despotic mistress, who smiled at this triumph. She ended by burning perfume and bathing with pure water everything which, in her eyes, had been soiled by contact with Phyllis and Teia, and she ordered Propertius to change his clothes, especially his shirt, and to expose his hair three times to a sulphur flame. Finally, she caused fresh coverings to be brought for the couch, where she and her lover now took their places: such was the peace that was achieved between them (*et toto solvimus arma toro*).

Propertius must have survived his Cynthia. A rival, a vile courtesan named Nomias, who disposed of her nights at a villainous price on the public highway, poured the poison which one of Cynthia's lovers had caused to be prepared by a witch in order to avenge himself of an affront which he had received from his proud mistress. Propertius was absent then and was unable to take charge of the funeral, which was conducted hastily and without ceremony;

no perfumes were cast upon the pyre; no vase filled with wine was broken over the smoking ashes of the victim of this black deed; there seemed to be a desire to efface all traces of the crime. When Propertius returned to Rome, Cynthia had been buried on the banks of the Anio, on the Tiber Road, in the very spot which she had chosen for her sepulchre. Propertius was thunderstruck by her sudden death, but he did not seek to punish those guilty of it; he was pursued, day and night, by Cynthia's ghost, which demanded vengeance of him; but he did not dare accuse the poisoner. The latter must have been a powerful personage, for Nomas, who had been the instrument of the crime, became suddenly rich and was soon sweeping the dust of the streets with her gold-broidered robe. On the other hand, Cynthia's women friends who raised their voices in regret or in her defense, were treated without mercy, one did not know by what order or on whose authority; for having placed a few wreaths on her tomb, the aged Petalis was bound to the infamous block and chain, and the beautiful Lalage, suspended by her hair, was beaten with rods for having invoked the name of Cynthia. At last, Propertius, besieged by his conscience and by the phantoms which troubled his sleep, erected a column and engraved an epitaph on the tomb of his dear mistress; he carried out, also, the last bequests of the unfortunate one, by taking into his own house Cynthia's old nurse and well-beloved slave; and in spite of advice which came to him through the gate of dreams, he did not burn the verses which he had devoted to his amours. One night, Cynthia's melancholy shade appeared to him and said: "Live for others now. Soon you shall be with me alone; you shall be with me, and our bones, mingled together, shall repose in the same tomb." At these words, the plaintive shadow vanished in the poet's embraces although he thought to seize it and lift it to the kingdom of the Manes. Propertius did not long survive her whom he never ceased to weep; he died at the age of forty years and was reunited with Cynthia in the tomb which he had reared for her on one of the pleasantest sites beside the cascades of the Tiber. Cynthia, who shares her poet's immortality, was, however, nothing more than a famous courtesan.



## CHAPTER XXVI

THE love of courtezans constituted the whole life, the whole renown of a contemporary of Propertius. Tibullus lived but to love and hymn his mistresses. Tibullus, friend of Virgil, of Horace and of Ovid, was, like them, a great poet and a tender lover. He was born at Rome forty-three years before the Christian era, the same day as Ovid. His taste for poetry revealed itself early and, from the age of seventeen years, he recognized the fact that he was not made to follow the career of arms, but that his temperament, rather, led him toward a career of pleasure. "It is there that I am a good chief and a good soldier!" he cried in one of his elegies. Indeed, the voluptuous life, which was his vocation, was not slow in exhausting his physical forces and increasing his nervous sensibility; he did not possess a constitution sufficiently energetic to stand up for long under the abuse of those pleasures which Roman corruption had brought to so monstrous a degree of perfection; in the midst of young debauchees, whose orgies he shared, he worried all the time over his physical inferiority, and soon perceived his impotence. He then resolved to recover by means of his art those pleasures which his debilitated constitution was no longer capable of procuring for him. Up to that time, he had scattered his attentions among a hundred mistresses; he concentrated them from now on upon a single woman. This woman could have been none other than a courtesan; for at Rome, law and custom were opposed to any illegitimate love addressed to a woman of free condition which did not end in marriage. Tibullus was not concerned with marrying, and he was not in search of a secret and guilty liaison which he would have been obliged to conceal even from the eyes of his friends. Quite the contrary, he wished to take the public as the witness and confidant of his amorous pursuits.

His choice first rested upon a courtesan whom he calls Delia in the first book of his Elegies, but who must have had another name. According to the most probable opinion, she was a freed woman named Plania, whose husband cleverly exploited her beauty and coquetry. Tibullus was not rich enough to be accepted or even tolerated by this avaricious husband, who had no jealousy except where

an unproductive infidelity was concerned. But Delia's mother, indignant at the shameful servitude imposed upon her daughter, took Tibullus' part with his sweetheart, whom he loved but whom he did not pay. It was the mother who brought Delia to Tibullus, under cover of darkness, and who, fearful and silent, secretly joined their trembling hands; it was she who presided over their nocturnal rendezvous, who waited for the lover at the door, and who recognized the distant sound of his steps. These rendezvous, it is true, may not have been very dangerous to the virtue of the wife or the honor of the husband; for Tibullus himself tells us that before he had won Delia's heart he was no longer a man: "More than once," he says, "I took in my arms another beauty; but when I was about to taste happiness, Venus would remind me of my mistress and betray my fires; then this beauty would leave my couch, saying I was under the power of an evil spell, and she would publish, alas! my sad impotence." It is permissible to believe that Tibullus had undergone no change in becoming Delia's lover. That is why, no doubt, discontented with himself and worried over his own impotence, he suggests to the aged mother "that she teach her chastity (*sit modo casta doce*), even though the sacred fillet does not bind up her hair, even though the flowing robe does not hide her feet." It was, then, on the part of the poet, a love that was more ideal than material, and the heart was more concerned than the body. Nevertheless, the two lovers saw each other sometimes at night, unknown to the husband, and Tibullus, exalted by his wholly Platonic tenderness, would wait patiently at Delia's door until this door, often enough mute and motionless, would swing furtively on its hinges, if the jealous spouse happened to be absent or asleep: "I feel nothing of the cold of a winter night," he said, after he had cursed that inexorable door, "nothing of the rain which falls in torrents; these harsh tests find me insensible, provided Delia draws at last the latch and that the tacit signal of her finger calls me to her side."

This love possessed all the characteristics of other amours: jealousies, ruptures, reconciliations, tears and kisses; but the poet found great difficulty in accustoming himself to his mistress' trade. He knew well enough, however, that he could not pay the price of her caresses, and that he must shut his eyes or break with her: "O you who sell your love to the first comer," he cried out with rage, "whoever you may be, may the funeral stone rest upon your bones!" He

had no gold with which to gratify the avariciousness of Delia's infamous husband; he had recourse to philtres and enchantments, in the hope of repelling his rivals and forcing his mistress to be faithful to him, but enchantments and philtres availed him nothing: "I have done everything, everything," he wrote to Delia, "and it is another who possesses your love, another who enjoys and is happy in the fruit of my incantations!" Delia, tired of complaints and reproaches which she knew she deserved all too well, finally closed her door upon the desolate poet. "Your door does not open," he remarked with bitterness, "it is a hand filled with gold that must knock there." In his despair, he even went so far as to denounce his own love to the husband, who feigned ignorance of it, and offered to aid the latter in guarding his wife, as a devoted slave might have done. Delia, who had been rendered astute by her vicious habits, merely laughed at Tibullus' denunciations and maintained brazenly that she had never given him anything but sympathy. The husband pretended to believe her and imposed silence on her accuser; but the latter, stung to the quick and irritated at being given the lie, entered into the most circumstantial details on the subject of his liaison with the perfidious one: "Sometimes," he tells the sly husband, "in pretending to admire her pearls and her ring, I have, under this pretext, taken her hand; sometimes with a heady wine I have poured sleep for you, while in my own more sober cup a furtive water was assuring me of victory!" The husband shrugged his shoulders and smiled without replying, as though to say: "What fools these poets are!" Tibullus, tormented by jealousy, then undertook to give advice to this deceived husband, who was happy in being what he was: "Take care," he told him, "not to let the young fellows come too often; take care that, when she is reposing, a robe of ample folds does not leave her bosom uncovered; take care that her signals do not escape you, and that, with her damp finger, she does not trace amorous characters on the table!" Tibullus forgot that it was with himself that Delia had learned the art of deceiving her Argus; he himself had given her the secret of essences and herbs which would efface the livid imprint made by the tooth of a lover in the combats of Venus (*livor quem facit impresso mutua dente Venus*).

Tibullus had offended Delia too much for her to pardon his outrages; the break between them was definitive, and the husband found this to his liking, since his wife would no longer be distracted

from other more lucrative loves. When Tibullus was convinced of the impossibility of a reconciliation, he did not obstinately persist in a vain pursuit, but proceeded to take his love elsewhere. It was once more a courtesan, more avid and more inflexible than Delia. Nevertheless, he put himself to the pains of writing poems for her; he flattered himself that he would be able to capture this avaricious heart with the seductions of vanity; and so, he proceeded to burn his poetic incense at the feet of the disdainful beauty, whom he adored under the name of Nemesis. This courtesan was kept by a rich freed-man who had been sold many times in the slave market, and who owed his riches to contemptible industries. She did not care for this parvenu, whom fortune had barely scoured clean; but she had no taste for loves which brought her nothing: "Alas!" cried Tibullus, sadly, "it is the rich, I see, who are pleasing to your beauty! Ah, well! Let robbery enrich me, since Venus loves opulence! Let Nemesis swim in luxury from now on and walk through the city, scattering me largess with her dazzling glances! Let her wear those transparent tissues which the hand of a woman of Cos has interwoven with threads of gold! Let her steps be followed by those black slaves, burned by the fiery sun of India! Let Africa and Tyre give her at will their most beautiful colors, Africa her scarlet and Tyre her purple!" These were but the dreams of a poet, and Tibullus, after having pompously set them down in an elegy, did not hasten to put them into execution. He waited a year, a whole year, for the favors of this Nemesis, who undoubtedly made him pay for them in one manner or another, but who did not inspire in him the desire of demanding them and obtaining them a second time at the same price. He was on the point of disposing of the modest inheritance of his ancestors in order to satisfy the importunities of his new mistress; but his friend, Cerinthus, prevented him from committing this folly, and he endeavored to restrain himself from paying in other than his own poet's coin. As a result, he was disdainfully dismissed. "It is a vile procuress," he wrote to his friends, Cerinthus and Macer, "who has placed obstacles in the path of my amours. Nemesis herself is good. It is the infamous Phryne who discards me without pity; she carries forward and back, in the secrecy of her bosom, furtive messages of love. Frequently, when I am vainly imploring from the threshold, I recognize my mistress' voice from within, and yet, she tells me that Nemesis is absent; sometimes, when I am claiming



a night which was promised me, she announces that my pretty one is suffering and frightened by a threatening omen. Then I die of worry; then my distracted imagination shows me a rival in the arms of Nemesis, and all the ways in which he varies his pleasure. Then, infamous Phryne, I vow you to the Eumenides!" His friends consoled him and gave him to understand that Rome was not lacking in courtezans who would be proud to be loved and hymned by a poet like himself.

Soon we see Tibullus enamored of the young and chaste Neaera, who was not, probably, Horace's Neaera. Tibullus, in the third book of his *Elegies*, which he has dedicated to her, pictures her as an innocent child, reared by the tenderest of mothers and the most amiable of fathers. She must have been the daughter of freed-man parents, and yet Tibullus offers to marry her, or, at least, to take her as a concubine. Although gray hairs had not yet invaded his black locks, although old age with bent back and halting step had not yet come upon him, he felt that he was near his end: he was a lamp drained of oil, casting one last ray. The chaste Neaera, as he constantly calls her, refused to join her fresh and ardent youth to this cold and ravaged one; she viewed with pleasure the attention of which she was the object on the part of the noble poet; she listened to his verses and his sighs; she demanded no other presents than the collection of Tibullus' *Elegies*, written on white vellum and bound in gold. But she was at the age of love; and so, she gave herself to another, without withdrawing her friendship from Tibullus, who who had hoped for something better: "Faithful or constant," he said, "you shall be always my dear Neaera!" It was not without tears and struggles that he resigned himself, at last, to being nothing more than a brother to Neaera; he felt that he would die of chagrin, and he wanted these words to be engraved upon his tomb: "Grief and despair at being deprived of his Neaera have caused his end!" His friends, his ancient companions at table and in pleasure, the poets of love and courtezans, still drew him, by way of distraction, into their joyous gatherings; they invited him to sing the praises of Bacchus, who comes to aid the sufferings of lovers: "Oh! how sweet it would be to me," murmured Tibullus, emptying his glass, "to repose near you for long nights, to watch near you for long days! Faithless to the one who deserved her love, she has given it to one who is not worthy! Perfidious creature! . . . But even though perfidious,

she is dear to me still!" Bacchus, who won him over by degrees, caused Neaera's shade to vanish: "Go, slave, go!" cried Tibullus, extending his goblet to the cup-bearer: "let the wine roll in higher waves! It has been long since I anointed my head with the perfumes of Syria and bound my forehead with coronals of flowers!"

Tibullus knew well enough that he could no longer expect of a mistress that gentle exchange of sentiments in which his imagination still dreamed of finding happiness: "Youth and love," he remarked, regretting that he was still young and yet could be amorous no more, "youth and love, those are the true enchanters!" He no longer had recourse to magic and philtres in order to supply all that his devitalizing malady and fatal languor had taken away; he endeavored to prove to Neaera that he was still capable of becoming a husband and even, at need, a lover; he made a declaration of love to Sulpicia, Servius' daughter, and proceeded to sketch the portrait of his new-found divinity: "Grace composes in secret each of her gestures, each of her movements, and attaches to her every step. Does she undo her locks, one loves to see those vagabond tresses floating down; does she do them up artfully, that head-dress sets off her beauty. She inflames us when she goes wrapped in a mantle of Tyrian purple; she inflames us when she comes to us clad in a robe as white as snow." Sulpicia took pity on the dying poet; she gave him more than he asked, and she it was who witnessed the last gleams of that heart which was soon to be extinguished: "No other woman," he cried with enthusiasm, "could steal me away from your couch! . . . It is the first condition which Venus sets for our liaison! Only you can please me, and other than you, there is not in Rome a woman who is beautiful in my eyes. . . . If Heaven should send Tibullus another sweetheart, she would send in vain, and Venus herself would be without power!" But at the very moment the poet was uttering this oath of fidelity, he was unfaithful, and Glycera, one of the most delicious Greek courtezans that was in Rome, was endeavoring to win for herself a little share of immortality in his verses. The latter, astonished at the good fortune which he had not sought, thought he must owe it to his personal merits, and so set about to make serious love to Glycera, who loved only his elegies. Tibullus, for the first time in his life, endeavored to make love like a lover and not like a poet; he did not compose a single line of verse for Glycera, who had not the patience to wait upon a poetic old age, and who

soon turned her back upon the poor moribund poet. This cruelty profoundly affected Tibullus, whose health had become so frail that his friends realized he had been struck with death. Horace addressed to him a consoling ode, in which he begged him to forget the cruel Glycera (*ne doleas plus nimio memor immitis Glyceræ*), and Tibullus learned, almost at once, that Horace had succeeded him in the good graces of that capricious lady. Tibullus did not recover from the blow; he succumbed, at last, at the age of twenty-four years; his mother and his sister had closed his eyes, and on the day of his funeral his two mistresses, Delia and Nemesis, were to be seen clad in mourning and evincing the most lively grief; these two rivals walked together at the funeral and mingled their tears over their lover's pyre, each claiming the glory of having been the better loved.

The reign of Augustus was the heyday of poets and courtezans, who understood each other so well that it seemed they were inseparable; wherever there was a courtesan, there was always an amorous poet, one at least to make love to her in his verses. The brilliant Glycera shared her vogue and her admirers with the charming Citheris, another Greek courtesan, who might well have been the daughter of the one whom Julius Cæsar loved. Horace also had loved Citheris, in whom we are not to recognize the Citheris of Cæsar or of Cornelius Gallus. This Gallus, a friend of Tibullus, of Ovid, and of Virgil, a poet like them, and, like them, much sought after in the society of courtezans, was attached to Citheris, whom he hymned under the name of Lycoris, celebrating his love in a poem of four stanzas, of which we now possess only passionate fragments: "What does that procuress do," he cried indignantly, "when she endeavors to spoil my amours, and when she bears rich presents hidden in her bosom. She praises the young man who sends these presents; she speaks of his noble character, of his ruddy countenance, which no down yet shadows, of his blond locks which fall about his head in undulating ringlets, of his talent at playing the lyre and at singing! . . . Oh! how I tremble lest my mistress be unfaithful to me! . . . Woman is by nature changeful always; one never knows whether she loves or hates!"\* Gallus was absent from Rome, the war having called him with the Roman eagles to distant provinces; and as he fought, he evoked the memory of his beloved: "My Lycoris," he

\*Translator's Note:—"Donna è mobile," etc.; the thing has been said many times—Cf. François Ier: "*Femme souvent varie*," etc.

cried, "shall not be seduced by the fresh face of a young man, nor by his presents; the authority of a father and the rigorous commands of a mother shall endeavor in vain to make her forget me; her heart shall remain unshaken in its love!" In this amorous frame of mind, it naturally occurred to him that the most glorious victory to be gained over the Parthians was not worth a night in the arms of his mistress: "What is the war to me!" he exclaimed with a sigh: "Let them fight, those who seek in the labors of Mars riches or conquests. As for us, we shall fight with other arms: it is love which sounds the clarion and which gives the signals for the *mêlée*; and as for me, if I do not do valiant battle from the rising to the setting of the sun, may Venus treat me like a coward and take away my arms! But if my vows are accomplished, and if things turn to my honor, let the woman who is dear to me be the reward of my triumph, let me press her to my bosom and cover her with kisses, so long as I feel the force to love and am not ashamed to do so! And then, let generous wines, mingled with nard and roses, come to inflame my ardor! Let my locks, wreathed with flowers, be anointed with perfumes! Surely, I shall not blush to sleep in the arms of my mistress and not to leave the bed till the middle of the day!"

When Gallus came back from the Parthian war with a few wounds and a few gray hairs the more, he did not find his Lycoris as he had left her; she had not embroidered for him, as he had hoped, another cloak for his next campaign, for she would have had hard work picturing herself engaged in needlework, her eyes in tears and her face pale and despairing. She had taken new lovers; she did not even dream that Gallus would come back to her. The latter perceived that he was no longer living in the Golden Age, when, as he himself had said, "Woman was sufficiently chaste when she knew enough to be silent in public regarding her own weaknesses." He did not burn the verses which he had made for Lycoris, and which were, indeed, by now the common property of lovers; but he answered infidelity with infidelity, and found consolation among the courtezans. He wanted Lycoris to regret him, and through his *Elegies*, he conferred a vogue upon a number of young girls whose beauty had not yet made them famous. There were, first of all, two sisters, Gentia and Chloë, whom he possessed at one and the same time: "Do not quarrel," he said to them, in an effort to bring harmony between them, "do not quarrel over which of you has the whiter skin; quarrel only over



this point; which embraces her lover more, the one with her eyes, the other with her hair?" Gentia's locks were blond as gold; Chloë's eyes held a myriad gleams; finally, Gallus fell in love with a beautiful and naïve child named Lydia, to whom he became an amorous preceptor: "Show, young girl," he said to her, with admiration, "show your blond locks, which shine like purest gold; show, young girl, your white neck, which rises gracefully above white shoulders; show, young girl, your starry eyes, under the arch of your black brows; show, young girl, those rosy cheeks where glows, sometimes a purple fire; give me your lips, your lips of coral; give me the gentle kisses of the dove! Ah! you suck away a part of my drunken soul, and your kisses penetrate to the bottom of my heart! Do you not aspire to my blood and my life? Hide those apples of love, hide those buds which distill milk under my hand! Your bare throat exhales an odor of myrrh; there is nothing but delight in all your person! Hide, then, that breast which slays me with its beauteous splendor of snow! Cruel one, do you not see that I am swooning? I am half dead, and you abandon me!" But Gallus provided in his verses no rival to that Lycoris, whom he had hymned so amorously and whose name remained a favorite one among the women of pleasure. More than four centuries later, another Lycoris inspired the muse of a poet, Maximianus, who deserves to be confused with Cornelius Gallus, just as his Lycoris was confused with the one whom Gallus loved and hymned. But this Maximianus, the ambassador of Theodoric, as he had been, was but an impotent old man, who complained of having been the plaything of his mistress, and who took refuge in the distant memories of his youth in order to warm his heart again and to appear less ridiculous in his own eyes: "There she is, that beautiful Lycoris, whom I have loved too well," lamented the poet, "she to whom I gave my heart and my fortune! After all these years which we have spent together, she repells my caresses! She is astonished, alas! Already, she is seeking young fellows and other loves; she calls me a weak and decrepit old man, without remembering the pleasures of the past, without remembering that it is she herself who has made an old man of me!"

A friend of the true Gallus, an appreciator of the charms of the true Lycoris, and a great poet, also devoted the first inspiration of his muse to love. One might say that Ovid, the preceptor and legislator of the art of love, had learned his trade in the company of courtezans.

Ovid belonged to the Naso family; prominence of the nose was the distinctive characteristic and the erotic attribute\* of the males of this family. The name of *Naso* was handed down by them from father to son, along with that terrible nose which had made one of their ancestors famous. In this respect, as in all others, this last of the line had not degenerated. He was a voluptuary, who early began to live according to his tastes: "My days," he himself said, in recalling the origin of his poetic surname, "my days flowed away in idleness; the couch and leisure had already enervated my soul, when the desire to make myself pleasing to a young beauty put an end to my disgraceful apathy!" This young beauty was not, as some have, without reason, supposed, Augustus' daughter, Julia, widow of Marcellus and wife of Marcus Agrippa; she was, evidently, a simple courtesan, whom he has hymned under the name of Corinna. Corinna—it is Ovid himself who tells us—had a husband, or rather, a lenon (*lenone marito*); this husband, like those of the other courtesans, derived an indecent revenue from his wife's gallantries. Ovid, who was no richer than poets always are, was undoubtedly pleasing enough to the wife, but he was quite sure of being displeasing to the husband. This situation with regard to Corinna was, then, that of Tibullus with Delia and with Nemesis; only, Ovid's reputation as a poet had given him a running start, and as a consequence, the courtesans who wished to become famous disputed the honor of his love and verses. We may believe Corinna had numerous rivals; but the poet did not keep the vows he made to any of the rest, since Corinna alone was named in those elegies which she undoubtedly had not been the only one to inspire. We must never forget, in order to explain this singularity, that Ovid had composed five books of elegies, and had burned two of them, correcting the ones which he permitted to remain. However this may be, we have never known positively who this mysterious Corinna was, and the secret was so well guarded in Ovid's day that his friends in vain besought him for a revelation, while more than one courtesan, profiting by the discretion of Corinna's lover, usurped the nickname of this fair unknown and passed herself off publicly as the heroine of the poet's songs. According to one opinion, which is not the least unlikely one, Corinna was but the imaginative personification of a number of

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. Rabelais' Friar John (Book First, Chapter XL.): "*Ad formam nasi cognoscitur*," etc. The superstition is an old one.

courtezans whom Ovid had loved, at one and the same time or in succession.

If we are to follow Ovid's own story, love already had marvelously disposed him to receive the impression which his heart took upon meeting with Corinna: "Who could ask me," he demands, "why my couch appears to me so hard? Why the coverings do not remain on my bed? Why, during the night, which appears to me so long, I do not taste sleep? Why my fatigued members are always tossing under the spur of lively griefs?" He had seen Corinna, he loved her, he desired her. He must have met her at one of those *comissationes*, where good cheer, wine, perfumes, music and the dance favored communications of the heart and weakness of the senses. But Corinna's husband or lenon must also have accompanied her, and jealousy was awakened in Ovid before the possession of his loved one had given him the right to be jealous of her. He wrote to the latter to give her instructions concerning the conduct which she should observe during supper; he taught her a number of little love-tricks which she, it may be, knew better than he: "When your husband is reclining at table, you should come in with a modest air and take your place at his side, and then let your foot secretly touch my own." He begs her to pass him the goblet from which she has drunk, in order that he may put his lips to the very place her own have touched: "Do not permit your husband," he tells her, "to throw his arms about your neck; do not rest on his hairy bosom your charming head; do not permit him to put his hand upon your throat and profane your bosom; above all, see to it that you give him no kiss, for if you give him a single one, I shall not be able to conceal the fact that I love you. 'Those kisses are mine!' I shall cry out, and then, I shall come and take them. Those kisses, at least, I can see; but caresses which are hidden under the cloth (*quae bene pallia celant*), those are the ones that arouse my blind jealousy. Do not rub your thigh against his, do not join your leg to his nor mingle with his gross feet your delicate little ones." But the poor lover who so torments himself grows sorrowful and indignant at the liberties which the husband, heated with wine, might be able to take in his presence and without his knowing it, without his daring to breathe a word: "To spare me all suspicion," he says to the beauty, "remove that cloth which might be the accomplice to what I apprehend, since I myself have tried it a score of times with my mistresses."

*Saepe mihi dominiaeque meae properata voluptas  
Veste sub injecta dulce peregit opus.  
Hoc tu non facies; sed ne fecisse puteris,  
Conscia de gremio pallia deme tuo.*

Ovid hoped to profit, in the interest of his love, by the drunken sleep of this husband, who was always spying on him; but suddenly, he became conscious of the futility of so many refined precautions; when the meal was over, the husband would lead his wife away and be the master of her; he might do what he pleased with her, without restraint and with no one to witness: "At least, do not give yourself to him without regret," he cries dolorously, and as though yielding to the violence of his own emotions; "let your caresses be mute, and may Venus be bitter to him!" But the very next day, Corinna fancied that she had a bone to pick with the one who gave her all this advice; and so, she went to his house at the hour when, stretched upon his couch, he was taking his siesta: "And along came Corinna, her tunic up and her hair floating down over her alabaster neck. Thus did Semiramis walk, they tell us, toward the nuptial couch; thus did Laïs, celebrated for her numerous lovers. I tore off a garment, which, however, hid nothing of her charms; she resisted all the while and wished to keep her tunic; but inasmuch as her resistance was that of a woman who does not care to win she soon consented without regret to be vanquished. When she appeared before my eyes without any veil, I did not remark in all her body the least imperfection! What shoulders, what arms did I see and touch! What an admirable throat it was given me to press! Under that irreproachable bosom, what a white and flawless belly! What large flanks, what a young rump! But why pause over each detail? I saw nothing that was not worthy of praise, as I held her, nude, pressed against my body. Who does not guess the rest? We both fell asleep from fatigue. If I might only often have such middays as that!"

He possesses his mistress, but he is not yet happy; he is jealous; he has rivals who pay dearly for a happiness for which he himself cannot pay; he quarrels, insults and mistrusts Corinna; he strikes her! "Fury made me raise against her a temerarious hand," he says, despising himself. "She weeps now, she whom I have wounded in my delirium!" He never forgave himself for this brutality. "I have had the fearful courage to pull her hair down over



her forehead," he himself tells us, "and my pitiless nails have furrowed her childish cheeks. I have seen her pale, on the verge of fainting, her face discolored and like marble which the chisel carves from the mountains of Paros; I have seen her features lifeless and her members trembling like the leaf of the poplar agitated by the wind, like the feeble bird which bends under the gentle breath of the zephyr; like the wave when the breath of Notus rides the surface; her tears, held in for long, flow down her cheeks like water from the snows of mountains!" Corinna frequently kept by her side an old procuress named Dipsas, who employed all sorts of artifices to bring about a break between her and Ovid, at least to get rid of the latter and to sell to richer lovers the moments thus stolen from him: "Tell me," demanded Dipsas with a sneer, "what does your poet give you besides a few verses? Ah! you shall have thousands to read; the god of verses himself, covered with a splendid golden mantle, shall strike the harmonious chords of a gilded lyre; what he will give you in gold, shall it not be in your eyes greater than the great Homer himself? Believe me, it is a good thing to give." Ovid heard of the perfidious suggestions of this hideous old woman and he could scarcely restrain himself from laying hands on her few white hairs, her eyes weeping with wine, and her cheeks furrowed with wrinkles; but he contented himself with cursing her in these terms: "May the gods refuse you asylum, may they send you an unhappy old age, winters without end and an eternal thirst!" The poet had need of all his eloquence, and especially of all his tenderness, in order to combat the detestable influence of Dipsas, who labored to pervert still further the naïve Corinna: "Do not ask of a poor man anything except his care, his services, and his fidelity!" he wrote to his mistress, whom he had left in a pensive mood. "A lover can only give what he possesses. To celebrate in my verses the beautiful ones whom I believe worthy of them, that is the only fortune I possess; to her whom I choose my art shall give a name which shall never die; precious stuffs shall be torn, gold and precious stones shall be broken, but the renown which my verses procure shall be eternal!"\* This consideration was not an indifferent one in the eyes of Corinna, who was proud of being pointed out, on the promenades, in the theatre, and at the Circus, as Ovid's muse.

Her husband had placed in charge of her a eunuch named Bagoas,

\**Translator's Note*:—The *exegi monumentum* theme.

who accompanied her everywhere, and who never permitted her to be seduced without first having consulted his master; Ovid could not succeed in putting this Cerberus to sleep, but he had won over Corinna's two hairdressers, Nape, who delivered his letters for him, and Cypassis, who would provide him with a hiding-place. This latter was pretty and well-built; one day, Ovid took a good look at her while he was waiting for his mistress, and whiled away the time by permitting himself everything which Cypassis would permit him. Corinna, upon her return, noticed a certain suspicious disorder in the bedroom; Cypassis' blushes appeared to confirm her suspicions, which Ovid's own face did not belie: "You suspect her of having defiled with me the bed of her mistress!" he cried, forcing himself to lay hold of his assurance. "May the gods, if such a desire ever comes to me, preserve me from carrying it out with a woman of despicable condition! Who is the free man who would want to have knowledge of a slave, and who would take in his arms a body furrowed with the blows of the whip!" He had little difficulty in persuading Corinna, and that evening, he wrote to Cypassis to ask her for another appointment. Corinna, it is true, was not hard up for amusement, and more than once her lover decided that she knew more than he had taught her: "Such lessons as those are given only in bed (*illa nisi in lecto nusquam potuere doceri*)," he murmured, as he tasted a kiss that seemed strange to him. "Some other schoolmaster has received the incalculable price of those lessons!" Corinna kept him at a distance, under various pretexts having to do with religion, the state of her health and her humor. Ovid sought the cause of this strangeness in a new affair on Corinna's part, and spent the time patiently with a number of chamber-maids who were not less beautiful than their mistress, but with whom the heart was not a matter of concern. Suddenly, he learned from these girls that Corinna had had an abortion, and that this abortion had endangered her life; Ovid became indignant at the odious deed his mistress had committed upon herself: "She who first endeavored to remove from her flanks the tender fruit they bore," he said to her severely, "she deserved to perish as a victim of her own hands. What! just because you fear your belly may be spoiled by a few wrinkles, must you lay waste the unhappy field of amorous combats!" After this event, Corinna redoubled her concern and tenderness for her poet; she was never with him often or long enough; the eunuch Bagoas shut his eyes or turned

his head away; the husband did not show himself; the dogs no longer barked; and so, they sent for the absent Ovid and almost dragged him there; they left him nothing to ask for, still less to desire. He tired of being thus monopolized by his mistress: "Tranquil and too facile amours become insipid to me," he says harshly; "they are for my heart a food that is too stale. If a bronze tower had never enclosed Danaë, Jupiter would never have made her a mother." Corinna was sufficiently astonished at this capricious and brutal languor; she did not possess the strength to reply, but wept in silence: "What need have I," Ovid said to her, with still more severity, "what need have I of a conniving husband, a husband who is a lenon?" Corinna understood that he no longer loved her.

Indeed, she soon had irrefutable proof of Ovid's frigidity: for one night, for one whole night, he remained dead and frozen under the kisses which she prodigally lavished upon him. Ovid was himself surprised at this sudden incapacity: "But recently," he observed, "I twice had acquitted my debt with the white Childis, thrice with the white Pytho, thrice with Libas, and, to satisfy the exigencies of Corinna, I have been able, as I recall, to make nine assaults in the space of one brief night (*me meminisse numeros sustinuisse novem*)."

But the more Ovid looked into himself, the less he was capable of finding himself: "Why do you make sport of me?" cried Corinna, red with shame and contempt. "Why do you force yourself, poor fool, in spite of yourself, to come and lie upon my couch? Some magician must have charmed you with a knot of wool; or else, you have just come, exhausted, from the arms of another (*aut alio lassus amore venis*)!" At these words, she leaped out of the bed, snatching up her tunic, and fled with naked feet; in order to hide from her women the affront which she had received from her lover, she did not forego her ablutions (*dedecus hoc sumptâ dissimulavit aquâ*), but she took refuge in a distant bedroom, as in a fort. Ovid did not feel that he was in a condition to retrieve his shameful defeat, and so, retired without daring to reappear upon the field of battle. As soon as he had gone, Corinna ordered that he was not to be received any more; and the following day, the door was closed to him; he wept and insisted; he addressed suppliant verses to the invisible Corinna; the response brought back to him was that, from then on, in place of verses, he would be asked for resounding coins. He began wandering around the house of the courtesan, and a hairdresser came to inform

him that, that very morning, Corinna had received a Roman captain who had just returned from the Asiatic wars, laden with wounds and booty. In spite of all this, Ovid, who was piqued at seeing himself thus superseded by a new comer, stubbornly insisted upon pounding on the door that had been closed to him. The eunuch Bagoas came to open it and threatened to call the watch-dog. Ovid then proceeded to curse soldiers who were rich in gold and women who preferred robust soldiers to poor and debilitated poets; and he consigned women and soldiers to the gods of vengeance; he compared, then, with the true Age of Gold, when love was not sold, this Age of Iron in which everything, even love, was to be bought with gold: "Today," he complained bitterly, "a woman, if she had the pride of the Sabines, would obey like a slave the one who had much to give her. Her guardian forbids you to approach her; she fears on my account her husband's wrath; but if I cared to give gold, spouse and eunuch would give me the freedom of the house. Ah! If there is a god who avenges disdained lovers, may he change into dust treasures so ill-acquired!"

Ovid was not yet cured of his love: this resistance, on the contrary, merely increased it. He spent nights on the threshold of Corinna's door; he groaned; he repeated her name with tears, with sighs and with prayers; he was more than once consoled by the beautiful Cypassis, who came to keep him warm and to bring him something to drink. But she was not the one to cause him to forget Corinna, and so, the poet was bent upon dying in front of this door that would not open. One morning, before dawn, the door did open gently and a man came out. "What!" cried the discomfited lover. "What! Must I, while you are pressing some lover in your arms, must I, like a slave, be the guardian of a door that is closed to me! I have seen him, that lover, coming out of your house, exhausted and with halting step, like that of an artisan tired from labor; but I suffered less at seeing him than at being seen myself!" Ovid believed that he was free of a love which seemed to him, from then on, a disgrace; but he could not forget Corinna, Corinna the unfaithful, Corinna given over to venal caresses, Corinna sold and merchandised like a *meretrix* at a street-corner!

He left Rome in order to seek forgetfulness in absence; he retired to the country of the Falisci, where his wife had been born, and he waited there till the echoes of his heart should be silent; but the name of Corinna came to him from the air of the fields. He came back to



Rome and found himself, more amorous than ever, in front of Corinna's door. His friends came to meet him; they joined him, surrounded him, and informed him that Corinna had become a shameless courtesan. She was to be seen everywhere with her gallants; she wore indecent costumes, in the street and at the theatre: she gave and received kisses in the sight of everybody and under the very eyes of a disgraced husband; her hair was often in disorder, her neck bore the print of bites; her white arms were bruised; many tales were told of her immodesty, her avarice and her affrontery. Ovid refused to believe what he heard; and then, they gave him visual proof of the degradation into which his mistress had fallen. He wrote her one last time: "I do not pretend that you are chaste and modest; but all I ask of myself is that I may go on deceiving myself as to the truth. She is not guilty who can deny the fault that is imputed to her; it is only the confession she makes that renders her infamous. What madness to reveal to the light of day the mysteries of the night, and to speak openly of what one does in secret! Before giving herself to the first comer, the *meretrix* at least puts a door between herself and the public; while you, you publish everywhere the opprobrium with which you are covered and you yourself proclaim your own shameful faults!" But Corinna was lost, to herself as to Ovid; she was stalking with great strides the lowest paths of Prostitution.

Ovid never effaced the name of Corinna from the verses which he had dedicated to her; under this name he had loved her, under this name he had hymned her: "Seek a new poet, goddess of loves!" he cried, in putting his hand for the last time to his book of elegies. If he still had mistresses, he no longer sang of them, for the reason that none any longer inspired him with love. He lived more than ever on intimate terms with courtezans, and, by way of recompensing them for the pleasure they procured him, he composed, under their eyes and by their inspiration, his poem, the *Ars Amoris*, that code of love and sensual pleasure. In his numerous poems, he gave, always, a large place to his amorous reminiscences, but he never confessed a single one of these mistresses by naming her in the verses composed in her honor; which gave ground for supposing that he had a secret liaison with the Emperor's daughter and that he was content with his happiness without divulging it. His exile was attributed to this passion for adultery, which Augustus did not dare to punish otherwise; according to other reports current at Rome, Ovid had

surprised Augustus committing incest with his own daughter. However this may be Ovid, the tender Ovid, exiled to the shores of the Euxine Sea, died of grief, among barbarians, after having endeavored to destroy all his own works, even those that embalmed his loves. He had come to learn, through letters from Rome, that Corinna, old and wrinkled, clad in a torn and faded tunic, had become a servant in a wine-shop where Tiber boatmen went to commit their debaucheries: "It would have been better if she had become a magician or a perfumer!" he reflected, numbed by the news. He gave up his soul by pressing to his cold lips a ring which held a few locks of Corinna's hair.

## CHAPTER XXVII

AFTER Ovid, we must go to Martial, in order to pick up in a manner the interrupted thread of our narrative, the portion dealing with the courtezans of Rome; for more than half a century, poetry was silent on their account, and we may presume that they were not merely waiting for Martial to speak for them, but that, if erotic poets were lacking to record the deeds and exploits of *famosae* during this period, the fault is not due to any halt in the progress of ancient Prostitution. Far from that, the successors of Augustus had taken it upon themselves to demoralize Roman society, and they immodestly set an example in all the refinements of debauchery; public morals were so profoundly affected that, among the poets, not one might have been found who would run the risk of ridicule by making an epic of his amours, as Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid had done. In the same manner, one would not have found a courtesan who would have devoted her youth to furnishing themes for elegies to an amorous and jealous poet. Jealousy, like love, appeared to be *passé*, and the pace of life was too swift to devote entire years to a single passion, rendered almost respectable by the length of its duration and partaking, so to speak, of the nature of matrimonial concubinage. When Marcus Valerius Martialis, born at Bilbilis in Spain about the year 43 of the Christian era, came to Rome at the age of seventeen to seek his fortune, he did not set about imitating the poets of love who had found a Maecenas to succor them in Augustus' century. He became, rather, a poetic accomplice in those debaucheries which characterized the reign of Nero and of the emperors who succeeded one another so rapidly down to Trajan. Martial owed his literary success to the very obscenity of his epigrams.

He appears to have taken for models the shameless epigrams of Catullus, who, at least, had composed them with a sort of gross naïveté; Martial, on the contrary, in order to please the debauchees of the imperial court, endeavored to improve, in point of license, upon the most brazen poems of his time; he was deliberately lubricious and did not even cast a veil of decent language over his indecent imagery. The applause which he received on all sides was his excuse and his encouragement; each new book of his Epigrams, sought after

and impatiently awaited by all the readers who knew by heart his preceding books, had a large circulation, and the scribes who prepared copies, richly adorned and bound, were not able to meet the demands of purchasers. This enthusiastic reception accorded to these licentious verses undoubtedly was not calculated to induce Martial to alter his manner or tone of writing, and when an austere censor advised him to be a trifle reserved in his words, if not in his ideas, he declined to accept advice any more than he would have listened to reproach, and he had a thousand reasons at hand to prove to his critics that he had done well in composing those indecent verses which they would have expurgated from his works: "You complain, Cornelius," he said to one of his censors, "that my verses are not sufficiently austere and that a master would not want to read them in his school; but these little works cannot please the public any more than husbands can please their wives, if they possess no *mentula* . . . This is necessary in composing pleasing poems, which are not fitting if they do not titillate the senses. Lay aside, then, your severity and pardon my jests and jocosities, I pray you. Give up chastising my books; nothing is more contemptible than Priapus become a priest of Cybele."

Martial had the suffrages of emperors and libertines; he took little heed of what those of good taste had to say; and he was satisfied with the irresistible vogue of his ordure-laden epigrams, which, in passing through the mouths of courtezans and *gitones*, came gradually to the ears of the populace in the street. Hence, that brilliant renown which the poet had acquired with his obscenities, which did not excuse all the malice which he knew how to put into them; his was a renown which eclipsed that of Virgil and of Horace, and which equalled Juvenal's satiric triumph. As a matter of fact, all the scandalous tittle-tattle of Rome was here set down, so to speak, in a host of little pieces, easy to remember and easy to circulate; in these fragments of verse the poet had set down under transparent pseudonyms, the names of persons whom he desired to ridicule, or whom he branded as with a red iron. He well might declare that he made no abuse of true names, and that he always respected personalities in his pleasantries; this did not restrain him from grave insults which he permitted himself with regard to a throng of people whom everyone recognized in his portraits, where these persons were not named, it is true, but they were depicted with a hideous verity. He did not run the



risk, it is equally true, of defaming honorable names and of heaping calumny upon the private lives of citizens. The usual victims of his sarcasms were always knavish poets, insolent courtézans, vile prostitutes, criminal lenons, prodigals and misers, déclassé men and lost women. He speaks, often, the language of the ignoble characters whom he portrays and, as it were, pillories; he is careful to forewarn his readers that they will not find in him either reserve or prudery of expression; "The Epigrams," he says, "are made for the frequenters of the Floral Games. Let Cato not enter our theater, or, if he does come there, let him stare with the rest!"

Martial certainly kept low company, a class of society which he has depicted in such blighting colors; he lets us see, in two or three passages, that his own manners were not much better regulated than those which he condemns in others; for he did not confine himself to parading his amours among the courtézans; he gave himself, sometimes, to vices not excused by the general corruption of his times, and which he is forced to justify by way of response to the bitter reproaches of his wife, Clodia Marcella. And yet, despite his fondness for debauches against nature, he pretended, in more than one epigram, to trumpet the uprightness and purity of his life. He judged it favorably from the comparison which he made, to his own advantage, of his private morals with those of his contemporaries, above all, with those of the emperors to whom he dedicated his books; "My verses are lascivious," he says to Domitian, "but my life is irreproachable (*Lascivia est nobis pagina, vita proba est*).” To explain this apparent contradiction, it is sufficient, perhaps, to date the pieces in which Martial vaunts his morality and those in which he holds it so cheap: the first belongs to his youth, the second to his old age. We should not forget that the first eleven books of his collection represent an interval of thirty-five years, which he passed, almost without interruption, at Rome. Martial, at twenty-five, may have lived chastely, merely catering in his verses to the sensuality of his protectors; at fifty, he had become a libertine, from having witnessed the libertinism of his friends; and it has been remarked, indeed, that, in the last books of his Epigrams, he no longer pretends to a reputation for chastity which his licentious writings had lost for him a long time before. It is in the eleventh book that he had the immodesty to insert that abominable epigram addressed to his wife, who had surprised him with his effeminate, and who wanted

to sacrifice herself in order to be rid of his infamous tastes: "How many times has Juno made the same reproach to Jupiter?" replied Martial, laughing; and he proceeded to find precedent in the example of gods and heroes for persisting in his guilty habits and for disdaining to listen to his sullen wife:

*Patace tuis igitur dare mascula nomina rebus;  
Teque, puta cunnos, uxor, habere duos.\**

The poet, it is true, had no illusion as to the character of his poems, and he knew well enough for what sort of readers he was composing them; for they were always free and often obscene. "No page of my book is chaste," he tells us frankly, "and it is the young who read me; it is women of easy manners and the old man who pesters his mistress." He then compares himself to his imitator Cosconius, who, like himself, composed epigrams, but epigrams so chaste that one never found in them a single immodest suggestion (*inque suis nulla set mentula carminibus*).\*\* He praises this chastity, but he assures the other that such prudish writings can be destined only for children and virgins. He is not concerned, then, with imitating Cosconius, and he jeers at venerable matrons who read his works in secret, and who then reproach him with not having written them for decent women: "I have written them for myself," he tells them with no hesitancy. "The gymnasium, the hot baths, the stadium are on this side; retire then! We are undressed: are you afraid of looking on men naked? Here, crowned with roses, after she has drunk her fill, Terpsichore advocates modesty and, in her drunkenness, no longer knows what she is saying; she names, without circumlocution and frankly, what Venus receives in her Temple in the month of August, what the villager places on guard in the middle of his garden; what the chaste virgin does not look at except by placing her hand in front of her eyes." We are warned, by this epigram, that Martial was not looking for matrons as his readers, and that, in order to find pleasure in this profligacy of ideas and expression, one must have lived the life of libertines and their amiable accomplices. The collected works of the poet of the *comissationes* were to be found in the library of all volup-

\*Translator's Note:—"Prepare, therefore, to give masculine names to your parts; and just imagine, my dear wife, that you have two vaginas.

\*\*Translator's Note:—The Latin says: "There is no *mentula* in his poems."

tuaries, and inasmuch as the format was one that could be held in the hand, they were read everywhere, at the baths, in the litter, at table, in bed. The bookseller who sold it at a very low price was named Secundus, a freed man of the learned Lucensis, who dwelt in the rear of the Temple of Peace and the market of Pallas; this bookseller also sold all the other lubricious books, those of Catullus, those of Pedo, of Marsus, and of Gaetulicus, which were not less sought after by the young and old debauchees, but which the courtezans affected not to esteem so highly as they did the Elegies of Tibullus, of Propertius and of Ovid. In all times, women, even the most depraved, have been sensitive to the record of a tender and delicate love. Martial, however, offered his readers a contemporary interest which no poet had been able to give his verses; his poems were, so to speak, a gallery of portraits, so lifelike that the models had only to show themselves in order to be at once recognized, and so maliciously retouched that the vice or the ridiculous features of the original passed into a proverb along with the name which the poet had attached to his epigram. Among these portraits, which are rarely flattering, we shall choose those of the courtezans whom Martial enjoyed painting, sometimes on a number of occasions and at different periods, as though the better to judge of the changes which age and fate had brought into their lives or persons; we shall put aside, with disgust, the majority of the portraits of *cinaedi* and of *gitones* whom Roman prostitution placed on the same footing with women of pleasure, and whom Martial displayed no scruple in treating likewise in his erotic and sotadic collection.

Here is Lesbia; she is not Catullus' Lesbia; she has no pet sparrow whose death she weeps, but she has lovers, and all the world knows it, because she opens her window and draws her curtains when she is with them; she loves publicity; secret pleasures are savorless for her (*nec sunt tibi grata gaudia si qua latent*); thus her door is never closed nor guarded when she abandons herself to her passions; she wants all Rome to see her at that moment, and she is not disturbed nor put out if someone enters, for a witness to her debauch gives her more pleasure than her lover does; she has no greater happiness than to be caught in the act. "Take at least lessons in modesty from Chione and from Helide!" cries the indignant Martial to her. Chione and Helide were a pair of wandering she-wolves, who hid their infamies in the shadow of the tombs. This Lesbia, as she grew old, fell into

the lowest stages of prostitution, and devoted herself more particularly to the *ars fellationis* (Book II, Epigram 50). She had become ugly, and she was astonished, despite the advice of her mirror, that her lovers of former days did not preserve for her their old desires and ardor. She blamed, on this score, Martial's frigid sloth, whereupon the poet ended by telling her, by way of excusing his own obstinate impotence: "Your face is your cruelest enemy" (*contra te facies imperiosa tua est*). A long time afterward, left in her abandonment with only her memories, Lesbia recalled with pride the numerous adorers whom she had had; she enumerated them, their names, their ranks, their characteristics and their faces, before the areopagus of aged procuresses, who listened to her mockingly. "I have never given my favors gratis!" she said proudly (*Lesbia sejurat gratis nunquam esse fututam*); and while she was speaking thus of the past, the porters, whom she employed now in a different rôle, would beat at her door to know which of them would be paid that night.

Here is Chloë; not Horace's Chloë; she is not even concerned with recalling the graces of her celebrated namesake; she is no longer young, but she is always gallant; she consoles herself, like Lesbia, at being no longer sought after by procuring pleasure in return for her silver. She can do no less to accustom herself to the disdain which meets her everywhere, but she still keeps up the pretense of being paid for her favors. Martial says to her harshly: "I may pass over your face and your neck and your hands and your legs and your breasts and your *nates*; in short, not to bore myself with describing what I may pass over, Chloë, I may pass over your whole person." But Chloë was rich, and might overlook the matter of price; she even stood the expense herself, with a generosity that was rare enough with women of her sort. She was greatly taken with a young lad who possessed no other fortune than his beauty and his fine shoulders. Martial named him Lupercus, by allusion to those priests of Pan who ran utterly naked through the streets of Rome at the feast of the Lupercalia, and who rendered fecund all the women whom they touched with their goat-skin thongs. Chloë's Lupercus was as naked and as poor as a Lupercal priest, and Chloë deprived herself in order to clothe and adorn him; she presented him with precious stuffs of Tyre and Spain, with a cloak of scarlet, a toga of the wool of Tarentum, Indian sardonyxes, Scythian emeralds, and a hundred pieces of gold newly struck. She could refuse nothing to this avid and needy



lover, who was incessantly making demands upon her. "Woe to you, shorn ewe!" cried Martial. "Woe to you, poor old girl! Your Luperus will leave you wholly fleeced!" The prediction was not realized. Chloë had gained enough in her own good time to be able to spare for her lovers a part of the gold which she had received; she was not niggardly with them; but since she paid them in place of being paid by them, she was more difficult to please. She devoured like a larva the youth and health of her hangers-on; she had seven of them, who died one after another, and all from the same cause; she erected very respectable tombs for them, with an inscription in which she stated naïvely: "It is Chloë who built these tombs." They never called her after that anything but the *Woman Who Weeps for Seven Husbands*.

Martial, it must be confessed, was not always disinterested in his Epigrams; thus, the insults which he addresses to the courtesan Thaïs spring only from an excess of personal resentment; he there accuses Thaïs of refusing no one and of giving herself to every comer, as though this were the simplest thing in the world (Book IV, Epigram 12); and again, he reproves Thaïs for refusing him by saying that he was too old for her (Book IV, Epigram 50). Thaïs undoubtedly did not care to be a party to the ignominious test which he proposes as a proof of his virility, for he revenged himself on her by the most hideous portrait that was ever drawn of a woman: "Thaïs smells worse than the old barrel of an avaricious fuller, which is broken down in the street; she smells worse than a goat that is making love; worse than the chops of a lion; worse than the skin of a dog flayed alive in the suburbs beyond the Tiber; worse than a foetus, putrifying in an egg spawned before its turn; worse than a wine-jar infected with rotting fish. By way of neutralizing this odor with another, each time that Thaïs lays off her clothing to go to the bath, she sprinkles herself with *psilothrum*\* or sprays herself with chalk, diluted in an acid, or rubs herself down three or four times with a pomade made of liver-grease. But when she thinks she has been freed from her stench by myriad artifices of the toilet, when she has done everything, Thaïs smells always like—Thaïs (*Thaïdia Thaïs olet*).” This horrible picture is less repulsive than the one given us of Philenis, against whom Martial undoubtedly held other and more serious grudges. Philenis, moreover, was not fancy-inspiring since the poet has her die at an age<sup>†</sup> almost as advanced as that of the Sibyl of Cumæ. She had a

\*Translator's Note:—A depilatory ointment.

husband, or rather a companion in concubinage, named Diodorus, who appears to have distinguished himself in some distant expedition, and who, upon returning to Rome, where triumphal honors were awaiting him, was shipwrecked in the Aegean sea; he succeeded in saving himself by swimming, and Martial attributes this unheard-of fortune to an indecent vow on the part of Philenis, who in order to obtain from the gods the return of her Diodorus had promised to Venus a simple, unsophisticated maiden like those the chaste Sabines love (*quam castae quoque diligunt Sabinae*). This Philenis, a sort of virago, who prided herself on being half a man, had an unbridled passion for women. "She goes into such transports," says Martial, "that she devours in one day eleven young girls, without counting the young boys." Her robe drawn back, she went in for gymnastics, and, her limbs rubbed down with yellow powder, she would hurl the heavy leaden discus like the athletes; she would compete with them, and, all soiled with mud, would receive like them the lashes of the master of the Palaestra. She never supped, she never sat down at table without having first consumed seven measures of wine, and she thought she had a right to as many more, after she had eaten six ithyphallic loaves. She gave herself to the filthiest pleasures, under pretext of playing the man's part to the limit (*Non fellat: Putat hoc parum virile; sed plane medias vorat puellas*).\* This abominable gladiatrix was at once a magician and a procuress; she possessed a stentorian voice, and she made more noise by herself than a thousand slaves put up for sale or a flock of cranes on the banks of the Strymon: "Ah! what a tongue is reduced to silence!" cried Martial, when she had been snatched away by death from her gymnastic exercises, from her debaucheries and from her infamous trade. "May the earth rest lightly upon you!" reads the epitaph which the poet composed for her: "may a sprinkling of sand cover you, so that the dogs may be able to get at your bones!"

Philenis probably had interfered with Martial in his amours; for after the portrait that he drew of her, one could not suppose that he had ever looked upon her in a better light; but one may be assured that he had not always been so disdainful toward Galla, whom he did not care so much for any more; after having insulted her bitterly, after having mocked her decrepitude and her forlornness, he lets him-

\*Translator's Note:—"She does not indulge in *fellatio*, as she does not think this quite manly; but she certainly devours young girls," etc.

self go in a confession which shows us how unjust he had been in his treatment of this courtesan. He tells us that she formerly had demanded 20,000 sesterces (about 5,000 francs)\* for one night "and this was not too much," as though he took pleasure in recalling the fact. At the end of a year, she did not ask more than 10,000 sesterces: "It is dearer than it was the first time!" thought Martial, who did not conclude the bargain. Six months later, she had fallen to 2,000 sesterces; Martial offered her but a thousand, which she did not accept; but a few months later, she herself came to offer herself for four pieces of gold; Martial in his turn refused. Galla was stung to the quick and became generous: "Come, then, you can have it for a hundred sesterces!"\*\* she said. Martial, whose desire for her had wholly passed, still found this sum exorbitant. Galla made a mouth and turned her back on him. One day she met him; he had just received a gift of one hundred quadrantes; she wished to have this gift, and she offered in exchange for it what she had formerly valued at 20,000 sesterces. Martial replied dryly that the gift was destined for his favorite boy, and went his way. Galla had no ill feelings; she looked Martial up and wanted to give herself to him for nothing: "No, it is too late!" replied the capricious poet. Must we believe, from this Epigram, that Galla had become so contemptible and so different from her former self in those few years? Martial represents her at first as having espoused six or seven effeminate, whose locks and whose well-combed beards had seduced her, but who had miserably deceived her amorous expectations:

*Deinde experta lactus, madidoque simillima loro*  
*Inguina, nec lassâ stare coacta manu,*  
*Deseris imbelles thalamos, mollemque maritum.*

Martial advises her to seek compensation by making a choice among those rustics, robust and hairy, who speak only Fabian and Curian dialects; but he advises her, on the other hand, not to be too sure of appearances, because there are also eunuchs among them: "It is difficult, Galla, to find a real man for a husband," he tells her jokingly. Galla is no more than the shadow of what she was: "When you are in the house, your hair is absent and is being curled in a shop in the Suburan quarter; at night, you remove ten teeth as

\*Translator's Note:—A little over \$700 in Martial's time.

\*\*Translator's Note:—About \$4. A hundred quadrantes came to about the same.

well as your robe of silk, and you sleep besmeared with a hundred pomades, but your face does not sleep with you (*nec facies tua tecum dormiat*).” She regretted always having turned a deaf ear to Martial’s overtures, and sought an occasion to be reconciled. She promised him marvels, she offered him countless allurements; but the poet, rancorous, remained deaf (*mentula surda est*) and was unable to recover his former passion in the presence of this wrinkled face, these withered charms and grizzled locks, more capable of inspiring respect than love (*cani reverentia cunni*).

He seems to take a pleasure in biting back at his old loves, and he does not spare those who have not spared him. Thus, after having, with a frightful cynicism, shown us Phyllis, who forces herself to satisfy two lovers at once, (Book X, Epigram 81), he does not conceal from us the fact that his senses no longer respond to this Phyllis, who gives him the tenderest names, the most passionate kisses, the most ardent caresses, and who yet cannot draw him out of his torpor (Book XI, Epigram 29). It is out of irony, no doubt, that he indicated a surer method of working upon a young man, old woman though she may be; he whispers to her what she ought to say: “Look you, here are a hundred thousand sesterces, farms on the slopes of Setia, wine, houses, slaves, gold plate and furniture!” This Phyllis was, then, very rich, if Martial is not making use of a pleasant hyperbole to indicate the foolish promises which old women were in the habit of making their lovers when dizzy with sensual desire. However this may be, Phyllis, or another of the same name, reappears upon the scene (Book XI, Epigram 50), and Martial, who no longer insults her, but who appears, rather, to be supplicating her, complains of her lies and of her rapacity: “Sometimes, it is your artful maid who comes to complain of the loss of your mirror, of your ring, or your earrings; sometimes, it is contraband silks which may be purchased cheaply; sometimes, it is perfumes which are needed to refill your scent-box; then it is an amphora of Falernian, old and musty, in order to pay a gabbing old sorceress for curing your insomnia; then it is a monstrous sea-wolf or a two-pound mullet with which to regale the opulent lady-friend to whom you are giving a supper. Out of modesty, O Phyllis, be true and be just at the same time; I refuse you nothing; so refuse nothing to me.” How had that Phyllis whose own hand was so impotent a little while back\*—how had she become,

\*Translator’s Note:—“*nec lassa starâ coacta manu.*”



all of a sudden, a desirable beauty and one who must be gratified at any cost? The metamorphosis continues, and Martial's vows reach a climax: "The beautiful Phyllis, for one whole night, lent herself to all my fantasies (*se præstitisset omnibus modis largam*), and I thought the next morning of the present which I would make her, perhaps a quantity of Cosmus' or Niceros' perfumes, perhaps a good supply of Spanish wool, or perhaps ten pieces of gold with Caesar's effigy. Phyllis leaps on my neck, caresses me, gives me kisses as long drawn out as those which the doves exchange in their amours, and ends by asking me for an amphora of wine." Phyllis underwent a new transformation to her disadvantage, and Martial recognized the fact that he had been too hasty in retracting all the evil he had said of her before possessing her. It all might better be explained if this name of Phyllis designated two or three different courtezans, whom Martial had treated quite differently, beginning with disdain, passing to love and ending with boredom.

The other courtezans who are to be met with here and there in the twelve books of Martial's Epigrams do not appear more than twice, and often but a single time; but we should beware of assuming, therefore, that they had made a less lively and less durable impression upon the poet's fickle and fantastic mind. We must never take literally the harsh names he calls them, which were perhaps but a threat of war in order to arrive the sooner at a truce. Thus, the first time that he was attached to the poor Lydia (Book XI, Epigram 21), he depicts her as incapable of inspiring love and giving pleasure (*Lydia tam laxa est, equitis quam culus aheni*). That was rather a brutal beginning, it is true; his sentiments changed from the moment he saw Lydia close up, when he recognized in her certain qualities which implied others; he does not yield on all these points, as a matter of fact, and he continues the war, in order not to appear to be laying down his arms too soon: "They do not lie, Lydia, when they say you have a beautiful complexion, if not a beautiful face. That is true, especially if you remain motionless and mute like a wax image or a picture; but so soon as you speak, Lydia, you lose that beautiful complexion, and the tongue does no more harm to anyone than it does to you." This was an adroit fashion of giving Lydia to understand that he asked no more than to be allowed to teach her how to speak, and that at need he would speak for her. Martial had made his profession of faith with regard to his amorous tastes: "I prefer a

girl of free condition," he said gaily, "but lacking that, I can content myself well enough with a freed-woman. A slave would be my substitute; but I should prefer her to two others, if by her beauty she was worth to me a girl of free condition." It may be seen that Martial was not difficult to please where the rank of his mistresses was concerned, and they did not have to justify their lowly birth to him, since he did not share the prejudice of the old Romans, who saw a dishonor in the relations between a free man and a slave girl. He did not rise up as a defender of the courtezans, who were often slaves, exploited and sold by a tyrannical and avaricious master; but he covers them often with the cloak of indulgence. When a Roman knight named Paulus beseeches him to compose against Lysisca verses which will make her blush and irritate her, he refuses to lend himself to a cowardly vengeance and turns the point of his epigram against Paulus himself. This Lysisca was, perhaps, the same one whose name Messalina took in order to gain admittance to a lupanar where she prostituted herself with the muleteers of Rome. At the time when Paulus was so bitter against her, this girl was looked upon as being merely one of the *fellatrices*, who were recruited from the ranks of courtezans, out of fashion and without employment. These degraded courtezans were so numerous in Martial's time that they are to be met with at every step in his Epigrams, where they compete with the vilest of men and with children who practice the same trade. The poet preserves the air of reproving them, but he never manifests on this subject any indignation which would have been out of place in the Rome of his day. He is more indignant against the old prostitutes, who persistently refuse to disappear from the scene and who offend the glances of voluptuous youths: "You have for women friends, Fabulla, only old and ugly hags, and uglier even than they are old; you have them follow you, you trail them after you, at the feasts, under the porticoes, at the games. It is thus, Fabulla, that you appear young and pretty." At thirty years, among the Romans, a woman was no longer young; she was old at thirty-five, decrepit at forty. Martial lets us see, everywhere, his aversion and his distaste for women who had passed the age of pleasure; he is ferocious and merciless toward them; he pursues them with bitter sarcasm; he offers them no other alternative than to get out of the world, where they can be of no use except as scarecrows. Sila wants to marry him at any price, Sila

who possesses as a dowry a million sesterces;\* but Sila is old, old, at least, in Martial's eyes. He thereupon imposes the most harsh and humiliating conditions: The bridal pair shall have separate beds, even the first night; he shall have his mistresses and his boys, without her taking exception; he shall embrace them in front of her, without her having anything to say; at table, she shall keep herself always at a distance, in such a manner that their garments, even, shall not touch; he will kiss her but rarely; she shall kiss him like a grandmother; if she consents to all this, he consents to marry her, her and her sesterces. This horror of old age is a monomania with the poet, who is obsessed with and saddened by the thought: he would be surrounded only by the ruddy faces of women and children; the very idea of a superannuated mistress takes away from him instantly the faculty of loving and, if he composes an epitaph on an old woman who goes to join her lover in the tomb, he pictures her at once as inviting death to pay her his fee (*hoc tandem si pa prurit in sepulchro calvo Plotia, cum Melanthione*), and this odious image paralyzes him, even in his mistresses' arms; and yet, despite his horror of all that is not young, he seems to take delight in painting old age under its most revolting traits; he always has fresh colors for his palette, when he wants to make a portrait of an old woman; he is like those who have a fear of ghosts and who speak of them incessantly, as though to insure themselves against them. Never has a poet rendered the faces of old women more grimacing, more hideous or more original. Horace himself is surpassed. Martial's masterpiece in this genre is the following Epigram, the terrifying energy of which we despair of being able to carry over: "When you have lived under three hundred consuls, Vetustilla; when all that is left you is three hairs and four teeth; when you have the bosom of a grasshopper, the leg of an ant, a forehead more pleated than your stole, and breasts like spider's webs; when the crocodile of the Nile has a narrow mouth by comparison with your grinders; when the frogs of Ravenna go better clad than you, when the gnat of the Adriatic sings more sweetly, when you see no more clearly than hoot-owls in the morning, when you smell like he-goats, when you have the rump of a skinny goose; when the bath-keeper, his lantern extinguished, admits you among the prostitutes of the cemetery; when the month of August is winter for you and when even the

\*Translator's Note:—About \$40,000.

pernicious fever cannot thaw you out; ah, then! you will still be glad to marry again, after two hundred widowhoods, and you will still seek, in your madness, a husband who will grow inflamed over your ashes! Is it not trying to till a rock? Who will ever call you his companion or his wife, you whom Philomelus once called his grandmother! But if you demand that one dissect your cadaver, let the surgeon Coricles prepare the table! . . . to him alone belongs the task of your marriage, and he who burns the dead shall bear before you the torches of the newly wed (*intrare in ipsum sola fax potest cunnum.*)” Martial did not pride himself often on his gallantries toward courtezans; they inspired him only to doubtful compliments. Galla, who undoubtedly did not smell so well as a matter of fact, resembled Cosmus’ shop, with its broken flagons and spilled essences. “Do you not know,” Martial says to her, “that at that price my dog would smell as well?” (Book III, Epigram 55). Saufeia, the beautiful Saufeia, consents to give herself to him, but she refuses stubbornly to bathe with him. This refusal appeared suspicious to Martial, who wanted to know if Saufeia did not have a pendulous throat, a wrinkled belly, and all the rest:

*Aut infinito lacerum patet inguen iatu;  
Aut aliquid cunni prominet ore tui.*

But having given rein to his imagination, he comes to the conclusion that Saufeia is a prude (*fatuaes*), and he leaves her (Book III, Epigram 72). As for Marulla, she does not receive company until being assured of what they weigh (Book X, Epigram 55). He pauses with Thelesilla only long enough to offer her an affront and to praise himself: he has won his spurs in love, and yet, he is not sure of being able, once in four years, to prove to Thelesilla a single time that he is a man (Book XI, Epigram 97). Pontia sends him game and cakes, writing to him that she is taking the morsels out of her own mouth to offer them to him: “Such morsels as those I would not send to anyone,” says the cruel Martial, who recalls the fact that Pontia stinks in the mouth, “and it is a sure thing, I would not eat them.” (Book VI, Epigram 75.) Lecania is served in the bath by a slave, whose sex is decently hidden by a girdle of black leather, and yet, young and old bathe with her nude: “Is it that your slave” Martial asks her, “is the only one who is truly a man?” (Book VII,



Epigram 75.) Ligella plucks out her superannuated charms, Ligella who is as old as Hector's mother, and who believes she is still of an age for amours: "If there is any modesty left you," Martial cries to her, "cease to pull the beard of a dead lion!" (Book X, Epigram 90.) Lyris is a drunkard and an abominable *fellatrix* (Book II, Epigram 73). Fescennia drinks even more than Lyris, but she devours Cosmus' lozenges in order to neutralize the poison vapors of her stomach (Book I, Epigram 88). Senia tells him that, passing one evening through a deserted street, she had been set upon by robbers, who were not content with robbing her: "You say so, Senia," replies Martial, "but the robbers deny it." (Book XII, Epigram 27.) Galla, in taking on years and lovers, has become rich and wise; Martial recognizes the fact but flees her, from fear of not being able to speak of love as he ought (*saepe solecismum mentula nostra facit*).<sup>\*</sup> Finally, Aegle, who is pleasing to old men as well as young, and who gives the former the vigor of the latter, by teaching them all that the others know (Book XI, Epigram 91), Aegle sells her kisses and gives gratis her most secret favors (Book XII, Epigram 55): "He who would have you give yourself gratis, young woman," cries Martial, "he is the most stupid and perfidious of men! . . . give nothing gratis except kisses!"

The majority of the courtezans, as their names indicate, were not Greek. They did not come from so far away, and many of them came from the suburbs of Rome, where their mothers had sold them into Prostitution. The scruples and the prejudices of old Rome were gone; that Rome which would not have suffered her children to dishonor her by putting themselves up at auction. The Romans still sought after Greek courtezans by paying them more dearly than the others; but so few were really of Greece, that they all, in order to grow rich, passed themselves off as Greeks, even in preserving their Latin names. And yet, some of them did not know a word of Greek; while others possessed nothing of the Greek type of beauty; those who had learned to speak Greek committed errors with every phrase they uttered; those who had adopted the Greek costume called it by a Roman name. One of these pretended daughters of Greece, named Selia, thought to Hellenize herself sufficiently by refusing to rub elbows with Romans: "You give yourself to Parthians," Martial, whom she had treated as a Roman, told her, "you give yourself to

<sup>\*</sup>*Translator's Note*:—"My *mentula* often commits a solecism."

Germans, you give yourself to Dacians; you do not disdain the beds of the Cilician and the Cappadocian; there comes to you an Egyptian lover from the city of Ceres, an Indian lover from the Red Sea; you do not flee the caresses of circumcized Jews; the Alanian on his Sarmatian horse does not pass your house without stopping. How does it come that you, daughter of Rome, do not find pleasure with the Romans?"

*Quâ ratione facis, quum sis Romana puella,  
Quod Romana tibi mentula nulla placet?*

This same Selia, whom a bad reading has made Lelia in another epigram (Book X, Epigram 68), had fixed in her memory a few Greek words which she repeated on every occasion with a Roman accent: "Although you are neither of Ephesus nor of Rhodes, nor Mitylene, but, as a matter of fact, from a Roman suburb, although your mother, who never perfumes herself, is of the race of swarthy Etruscans, and although your father is a rustic of the fields of Ercia, you are prodigal with your voluptuous words: *Zoë* and *psyche*. Oh, shame! you, a citizen of Hersilia and of Egeria! These words are only said in bed, and all beds should not hear them! . . . It is time for bed when a sweetheart has prepared herself for her tender lover. You desire to know what is the language of a chaste matron in such a circumstance; but if you did know, should you be any the more charming so far as the mysteries of pleasure are concerned, (*numquid, quum crissas blandior esse potes*)? Go on, you might learn and memorize by heart all Corinth, and yet, Selia, you would never be wholly Laïs!" There is spite in these epigrams, and Martial does not conceal the fact that he would have liked to be loved in the Greek manner by this Roman Laïs. When he does not accuse a courtesan of being decrepit, of smelling of wine, of being too rapacious, of devouring too many lovers, of having no more admirers, one may deduce, with some degree of certitude, that he has certain designs upon her, and that he is about to succeed; but he is, ordinarily, without regard and without pity for the mistress whom he abandons. It is, then, an extreme delicacy on his part not to insult nor defame Lycoris in leaving her for Glycera. "There was no woman whom I preferred to you, Lycoris," he tells her, "adieu! there is no woman now whom I prefer to Glycera! She shall be what you are now; you

can be no longer what she is; such is the work of time: I have wanted you, I want her now." He does not utter any evil of Lycoris, who was brown of complexion, and who, in order to whiten her tint, went to take up her abode along the Tiber, where the lively air was looked upon as favorable to the skin (Book VII, Epigram 13). When she came back from the country, he remarked the fact that she was no whiter than she had been, and he also perceived the fact that she squinted: Lycoris, it is true, had taken in place of the poet a lad as handsome as the shepherd Paris (Book III, Epigram 39). Martial seems to avoid confessing his mistresses. He proclaims them sufficiently when he praises them. Thus, in the presence of Chione and of Phlogis, he asks himself which of the two is the best built for love (Book XI, Epigram 60). Chione is more beautiful than Phlogis; but the latter has sensual charms which would give back his youth to the aged Nestor; charms which each one would like to meet in his mistress (*ulcus habet, quod habere suam vult quisque puellam*). Chione, on the contrary, experiences nothing (*at Chione non sentit opus*), any more or less than if she were marble; "O, gods!" cries Martial, "if it is permitted me to make a great prayer, and if you would accord me the most precious of boons, give Phlogis Chione's beautiful body and Chione Phlogis' other charms!"

The libertines of Rome were always making wishes of this sort; the play of their lubricious imagination was always in opposition to that reality of which they were tired or with which they were no longer contented. The speculative fancies of the libertine were bounded by voluptuous horizons, toward which Martial loved to look. Among all the mistresses he had had, the one he did not possess always excited his most ardent desires. Polla, a courtesan gifted with more delicacy than others of her kind, had for the poet a tender feeling, which he had not sought to inspire; she did not resist this feeling, but abandoned herself to it with passion; she did not hesitate to declare it, and in order that Martial might be aware of it, she sent him wreaths of flowers to speak for her. Martial received the wreaths and hung them up over his bed, according to the custom of lovers: "Why, Polla, do you send me these fresh garlands?" he wrote to her. "I should love better roses which you had withered (*a te malo vexatas tenere rosas*)." Martial, in reply to the gracious and amorous invitation which these brilliant flowers had brought him, was thereby addressing to Polla only a debauchee's repulsive thought; for he was

requesting that she let him know, by sending him the garlands which she had worn at the feasts, the number of assaults which she had sustained. Martial, it may be seen, did not pride himself upon his delicacy, upon those impulses of the heart which distinguished the Greek poets, and which found but a weak echo in the erotic Latins of Augustus' century. Did he desire, in a moment of sensual satiety, to picture the woman whom he would wish for a mistress, his mind did not seek her among virgins and matrons: "The one whom I want," he says, without blushing at his taste, "is the one who, easy in love, wanders here and there, veiled in the *palliolum*,\* the one I want is she who has given herself to my favorite boy before being mine; the one I want is she who sells herself in Tyre for two denarii;\*\* the one I want is she who can satisfy three at once. As for the one who demands golden crowns of gold and indulges in fine phrases, I leave her in the possession of certain citizens of Burdigala!" Martial had become gross in feeling, if not in language, by plunging into the slough of imperial debauchery. That contemptible society of courtizans and effeminate which surrounded him had ended by depriving him of his moral sense and by blighting his heart.

He had even come to respect no longer his wife, Clodia Marcella, a Spaniard like himself and the companion of his fortunes for thirty-five years. Shortly before returning with her to their native land, he had the sorry courage to address to her this disgraceful profession of faith, quite worthy of a consummate and incorrigible libertine: "My wife, go walk abroad, or else accustom yourself to my manners! I am neither a Curius nor a Numa nor a Tatius. Nights spent in emptying joyous goblets are my delight, while you hasten to rise from table after you have drunk a little water; you like darkness, but I like a lamp to illuminate my pleasures, and love to do battle with Venus by the light of day; you wrap yourself in veils, in tunics and thick mantles; for me, a woman couched at my side is never nude enough; turtledove-kisses are my delight, while those you give me resemble the ones you receive from your grandmother each morning. You never deign to second my amorous ardor, either in words or with fingers or with the least movement, but are as motionless as though you were presenting the wine and incense at a sacrifice. Phrygian slaves soiled themselves behind the door each time Andromache was in Hector's arms. . . ."

\*Translator's Note:—Greek mantle, mark of the courtesan.

\*\*Translator's Note:—About 35 cents.



*Masturbabantur Phrygii post ostia servi,  
 Hectoreo quoties sederat uxor equo.  
 Et, quamvis Ithaco stertente, pudica solebat  
 Illic Penelope semper habere manum.  
 Paedicare negas: dabat hoc Cornelia Graccho;  
 Julia Pompeio; Portia, Brute, tibi!  
 Dulcia Dardanio nondum miscente ministro  
 Pocula, Juno fuit pro Ganymede Jovi.*

Martial did not blush to invoke the example of these infamies, which the great names cited must have absolved in the eyes of antiquity; but his wife did not care to imitate Juno any more than Portia or Cornelia. Then the poet, indignant at finding so little compliance in his marital bed, wrote harshly: "Even if you do find it fitting to be a Lucretia all day long, by night I want a Laïs." But Lucretia was not slow in retaking her empire, which a decent woman never looks for in the realm of sensual caprice; it is permissible to suppose that the salutary influence of Marcella persuaded Martial to return to Bilbilis in Spain; she had property there which she held from her family; this property she gave over to her husband, and succeeded in rescuing him from the abyss of Roman depravity, in the depths of which he had forgotten himself for thirty-five years. Martial found himself purified, as it were, when he no longer breathed the same air as the courtezans, the *cinaedi*, the procuresses, and the lenons, those vile agents of lust, those odious ministers to debauchery, who made up almost the entire population of Rome. He did not burn his books of Epigrams, in which he had set down, so to speak, his exploits in Prostitution under the reigns of seven emperors; but he added an expiatory epigram, in which he implicitly recognized the fact that he had led an evil life up to that time, and that happiness lay in a rural life, by the side of an estimable and well-loved wife: "This wood, these springs, this shady trellis, this rivulet of fresh water which irrigates the meadows, these fields of roses which do not yield to those of Paestum, and which flower twice a year; these peas, which are green in January and which are never frozen; these fish-ponds where swims the domestic eel, this gleaming turret which shelters the whitest of doves; these are the gifts of my wife after seven lustra of absence. Marcella has given me this domain, this little kingdom. If Nausicaa were to abandon to me the gardens of

her father, I might say to Alcinoüs: 'I like my own better.' " This simple epigram is restful to the mind and heart after all the indecencies which Martial seems to have accumulated with pleasure in his collection, where one is very much astonished at finding a few instances of noble and virtuous indignation on the part of the poet.

Following is one of Martial's few sallies that do him honor, against those unpunished vices which follow in the wake of Prostitution: "You say that you are poor in friends, Lupus? You are not poor with your mistress; there it is only your *mentula* which complains of you. She becomes fat, the adulteress, from the conchs of Venus filled with the flower of the wheat, while your guest makes his meal on black bread! The wine of Setia, which would inflame snow itself, flows in the glass of this mistress, while we, we drink muddy and poisonous liquor from the casks of Corsica. You buy a night or a part of a night with the heritage of your fathers, your childhood's companion labors alone in another's fields. Your prostitute gleams with the pearls of Erythrae, and while you are drunken with love, your client is being led to prison. You give to this girl a litter borne by eight Syrians, and your friend shall be laid naked upon his bier. Cybele, chastisement of miserable *gitones*, Lupinus's *mentula* ought rather to fall under your sacred knives!"

We have not the courage to let Martial speak on the subject of masculine Prostitution, which seems to occupy him much more than that of women. It is difficult to form a conception of the state of demoralization into which ancient Rome had fallen with respect to the monstrous distractions of unnatural debauchery. We must read Martial in order to gain an idea of these disgusting manners, which, in the matter of love, had almost dethroned the feminine sex, and which had made of young boys and effeminates a new sex, devoted to shameful pleasures. We must read Martial in order to understand that age of corruption in which he led as bad a life as his contemporaries, and which dared face, without horror, the hideous promiscuity of the sexes. When we come, in this collection of epigrams, the majority of them obscene, upon a panegyric of the Emperor Domitian following or preceding one in praise of boys, when we meet, on one and the same page, with an invocation to virtue, a prayer to some divinity, and an invitation to the most brazen pederasty, we are convinced that the moral sense had been perverted in Roman society. Among the Greeks, at least, if there was no more

reticence in the matter of deeds, there was more decency, less grossness, in their expression. Undoubtedly, no more repugnance was attached by them to certain acts, reprehensible from the double point of view of human dignity and natural law; but this sensual degradation was relieved by their making of it devotion, friendship and an ideal passion. Among the Romans, on the contrary, with every refinement, vice had become more materialized and had ended by rejecting every sort of decent veil. The ears were no more respected than the eyes, and the heart appeared to have lost its instincts of delicacy, in the course of that moral induration which was the result of shameful habits. We do not desire to turn aside into the bypaths of Prostitution, which have nothing but repulsive and saddening sights to offer, in the presence of which our imagination would halt in fright. We prefer to send the reader to Martial himself and to the satirists of his century, Juvenal and Petronius. The first has said no less than Martial, but he has taken refuge in a concision which often renders him obscure and, in that manner, almost reserved; the commentators alone have supplemented his reticences, have borne the torch into the most discreet shadows; one enters with a sure step, but one is frightened by all that the poet has assembled in the way of turpitudes in this inferno of the Caesars. The second, under the form of a comic and licentious romance, has given us a picture of the excesses of his time; this romance is like a long hymn in honor of *Giton*, the horrible hero.

Petronius was, however, one of the cleverest and most refined of voluptuaries; Tacitus calls him the Arbiter of good taste, and this name has remained with him, without implying an approbation of his manners, which the court of Nero alone could justify. Petronius, it is true, did not pride himself, like Juvenal, upon being an incorruptible sage; he did not point out the infamies of his time in order to restrain others from them; he did not become at all indignant over the scandals which each one cynically retailed; he was amused, on the contrary; he was the first to laugh, and he appears to have regretted that he was not able to say more. His book is a frightful picture of the license at Rome, and when we reflect that we do not possess the tenth part of this romance of obscene adventures, it is easy to suppose that we have lost the most revolting episodes, the most infamous descriptions and the most characteristic filth, Petronius' work having been mutilated by Christian censorship, which, however, did not

succeed in wiping it out utterly. There remain enough impurities of every sort in the fragments which have come down to us to enable us to judge, at once, that work which was the delight of the Roman youth, the author who composed this work from his own memories and his own personal impressions, and, finally, the age itself, which produced such authors and which tolerated such books. There are a score of passages in the *Satyricon* which appear to have been written in a bad house, and the verve, the warmth and the nervous irritability of the romancer bear witness to the excitation which he had sought in the arms of love before taking up his pen. We shall not recall the principal scenes of this erotic and sotadic drama, nor the orgy of Quartilla, nor that of Trimalchio, nor that of Circe; for in this strange romance, orgy follows orgy with terrible descriptive power, and the characters constantly move in an atmosphere surcharged with lust! Alcytus and Giton, whom Petronius is pleased to picture for us as seductively as possible, are, none the less, types of baseness and perversity. The one, according to the author's own expression, is a young adolescent defiled by all sorts of debaucheries, rendered a freed-man and a citizen by Prostitution (*stupro liber, stupro ingenuus*), the slave of the one to whom a throw at dice had given him as a plaything, and who hired himself out as a girl to those who believed him to be a man; the other, the execrable Giton, takes the robe of a woman in the guise of the *toga virilis*, Petronius tells us, believing that from the cradle he has not been a member of his apparent sex, and fulfills the functions of a prostitute in a den of slaves (*opus muliebre in ergastulo fecit*). The marriage of the little girl of seven years, Pannychis, with Giton, was marked, undoubtedly, by extraordinary features which would have disturbed the slumber of a rhetorician who had become a father of the Church, and which would have found little mercy at his chaste hand, despite the originality and wealth of the material. It is possible to form an impression of what is missing here from the prodigious scene which takes place in the sanctuary of the Temple of Priapus, when the hero of the place, having had the imprudence to kill the sacred geese which tormented him, finds himself at the mercy of the priestess of the god Aenotheus and his companion, Proselenos. To the Latin alone belongs the incontestable privilege of placing in relief such horrors as these, which the French would blush to reproduce, even by wrapping them in a transparent gauze. Here is the singular and indecent revenge which



the two old women took on the poor slayer of the geese: "*Profert Aenothea scortum fascinum, quod ut eleo et minuto pipere, atque urticae trito circumdedit semine, paulatim cepit inserere ano meo. Hoc crudelissima anus spargit subinde humore femina mea. Masturisi succum cum abrotono miscet, perfusisque inguinibus meis, viridis urticae fascem comprehendit, omniaque infra umbilicum coepit lenta manu.*"\* This is perhaps the only passage in an ancient author in which there is question, from the erotic point of view, of flagellation with green nettles. It is inexplicable why the monks of the first centuries, who made so blind a warfare on the profane works of antiquity, should have permitted this frightful passage to remain in Petronius.

Almost all the aspects of ancient Prostitution are to be found in the *Satyricon*, where one encounters only prostitutes, effeminate and love-couriers, all that is impure in the traffic of man and woman. Among these procuresses there figures a matron, one of the most respected, named Philumene, who, thanks to the favors of her youth, had put into escrow more than one will and testament, and who, after age had withered her charms, hired out her son and daughter to old men without heirs. This Philumene sent her two children into the house of Eumolpus, a grave person, full of a capricious ardor, who had taken liberties with a vestal, and who did not hesitate to invite the little ones to the mysteries of Venus Callipyge (*non distulit puellam invitare ad Phygisiaca sacra*). Then the narrator, who fortunately speaks Latin, goes into details, which we shall not translate into a modest and colorless style. Eumolpus had informed everyone that he was gouty and crippled in the loins: "*Itaque, ut constaret mendacio fides, puellam quidem exoravit, ut sederet supra commendatam bonitatem. Coraci autem imperavit, ut lectum, in quo ipse jacebat, subiret, positisque in pavimento manibus, dominum lumbis suis commoveret. Ille lento parebat imperio, puellaeque artificium pari motu remunerabat.*" Such is, in a manner, the final picture of the romance. The little pieces of verse which have been collected at the end, and which are supposed to have been part of the text which was suppressed or lost, contain a few amorous lines, addressed evidently to courtezans, who are made known to us by eulogies, rather than by epigrams in the manner of Martial. Petronius was too fond of gentle and agreeable

\**Translator's Note*.:—The author, here as elsewhere, repeats himself. The general sense of the passage is indicated, here and in connection with a preceding quotation of the first part.

things to become wroth with these creatures, with whom he sought only pleasure. Sertoria is the only one whom he mistreats, a little, and that perhaps with good intention, in order to correct her habit of rouging herself unnecessarily: "It is a loss at once," he tells her, "of your rouge and of your face!" When Marcia sends him from the country spiny chestnuts and perfumed oranges, he tells her to bring her presents in person or to add a gift of kisses to that of fruits: "I will devour them all together (*vorabo lubens*)", he says to this amiable companion. But another is at his side, another whom he does not name; she wears a rose upon her throat: "That rose," he says gallantly, "draws from your breast an ambrosial dew, and it is then that it truly smells the rose!" At night, he is half awake under the spell of a charming dream; he hears the voice of Delia, who speaks to him of love and who imprints a kiss on his forehead; he calls to her in turn, he extends to her his arms; but he finds nothing about him except silence and the night: "Alas!" he murmurs, "it was an echo in my heart and in my ear!" But Delia is followed by Arethusa, the ardent Arethusa with golden hair, who comes with discreet steps into her lover's bedroom, and who already lies trembling beside him; she does not fall asleep, this foolish mistress! She imitates, curiously, the poses and the voluptuous devices which she has studied up in the famous code of pleasure and in the designs which accompany it (*dulces imitata tabellas*): "Blush at nothing," Petronius tells her, encouragingly, "be more the libertine than I!" (*Nec pudeat quidquam, sed me quoque nequior ipsa.*) Bassilissa does not offer him so much; she only accords her favors when she has been warned in advance (*et nisi praemonui, te dare posse negas*). Petronius praises the delights of the unexpected: "The pleasures born of chance," he tells her humorously, "are worth more than those which have been premeditated in letters." It was, probably, to revenge himself for the calculated resistances of Bassilissa that he reproached the latter with putting too much rouge on her cheeks and too much pomade in her hair: "To disguise yourself unceasingly," he tells her rudely, "is to show no faith in love ( *fingere te semper non est confidere amori*)."

Petronius, rich and generous, handsome and well-built, impatient and indefatigable in pleasure, diversified his amours by changing his mistresses every day. He would have died of exhaustion and debauchery, if Nero's wrath had not forced him to open his own veins in order to escape a threatened punishment. He would have preferred a death slower and

more voluptuous, for he was accustomed to repeat this axiom, which he so largely put into practice: "Baths, wines and love destroy the health of the body, and yet the happiness of life lies in baths, wines and love."

*Balnea, vina, Venus, corrumpunt corpora sana;  
Et vitam faciunt balnea, vina, Venus.*

## CHAPTER XXVIII

IT WAS under the emperors, it was under the perverse influence of their depraved manners, it was by their example and at their unhealthy instigation that Roman society made frightful progress in that corruption which ended by disorganizing it and by preparing the way for the triumph of Christian morality. This pure and holy morality had, indeed, shot a few precursory rays of light into pagan philosophy; but its counsels were without force and without effect, because they were not yet backed by religious authority, because they did not flow from dogma itself, and because they were alien in spirit to the prevailing cult. The religion of the false gods, on the contrary, appeared to give a permanent lie to those philosophic doctrines which tended to render man better by making him more self-respecting and more deserving, at the same time, of the esteem of others. This religion, wholly material and wholly sensual, could not suffice for elevated minds and noble hearts, which the Gospel of Christ found ready and waiting; but it required centuries of mysterious labor in the depths of souls\* in order to make those souls ready for the new faith, the new morality. All the excesses of lust, all the outbursts of passion, all the quests of pleasure were the result of an extreme civilization, which knew no religious restraint, and which aspired to no other end than the satisfaction of the most brutal egoism. Never was this egoism carried further than in the age of the Caesars, who were, so to speak, its monstrous personification.

"Vice is at its apex!" cried Juvenal sorrowfully, frightened by the infamies which he denounces in his satires. *Omne in praecipiti vitium stetit*. In a score of places in his book, this unhappy stoic curses the turpitudes of his time and regrets the austere virtues of the Romans of the republic: "Look, unhappy one, to what point of decadence we have come!" he exclaims with bitterness . . . "We have, it is true, carried our arms to the confines of Hibernia, we have recently subjugated the Orcades and Britain, where the nights are so short; but the conquering people of the Eternal City are doing what the vanquished peoples would not do!" The history of Rome, indeed,

\**Translator's Note*:—What Huysmans (Twenty Years After Preface to *A Rebours*) calls "the subterranean work of grace."



before the age of imperial degradation, is full of facts which bear witness, if not to the purity of manners, at least to the rigors of the law relative to public morality. In the year 457 of the foundation of Rome, Quintus Fabius Gurges, son of the consul, celebrated his aedileship by accusing before the tribunal of the people certain matrons who were in the habit of giving themselves over to debauchery (*matronas stupri damnatas*), and he caused them to be sentenced to an enormous fine, which was employed in erecting a temple to Venus near the great Circus. In the year 539, the aediles of the people, Vilius Rapullus and M. Fundalius, launched a similar accusation against a number of matrons and had them sent into exile. In the year 568, the consul, Postumius, having been advised of certain hideous obscenities which were committed in celebrating the feast of the Bacchanalia, took vigorous measures to extirpate the evil at its root, in an effort to annihilate this sect, propagated in darkness, under the vain pretext of embodying the mysteries of Bacchus. A young Roman knight named Eubutius came to complain to the consul that his mistress had been arrested at the Bacchanalia. This mistress was no other than a courtesan named Hispala Fecenia; a slave in her youth, she had continued, since her enfranchisement, her ancient trade, although she was one who should have been above this. She had contracted with Eubutius a liaison which cast no reflection on the young man's reputation, although he lived at the expense of the freed-woman (*meretriculae munificentia continebatur*). Hispala dwelt on the Aventine hill, where she was well known (*non ignotam vicinia*). The consul had his stepmother, Sulpicia, send for this courtesan, who was not astonished at being asked to the house of a respectable matron. There, Postumius interrogated her, in the presence of his stepmother, and obtained a complete revelation of all the horrors which had taken place at the nocturnal Bacchanalia. The following day, he went to the Senate and demanded the means of exterminating an infamous sect which already numbered seven thousand initiates at Rome and in its environs. The Senate shared Postumius' indignation and pronounced terrible penalties against the abominable instigators of the Bacchanalia. As for Eubutius and his companion, they were generously recompensed; the senate-consul declared that the beautiful Hispala, despite her origin and despite her trade, might marry a man of free condition, without compromising in any manner her husband's fortune and reputation. She married Eubutius and took

the rank of matron, under the safeguard of consuls and praetors, who became her guarantors against all insult. The Bacchanalian festival, dying out under the proscription of the Senate, did not dare to show its head again at Rome until the reign of the emperors.

Public morals were lost, throughout the Roman empire, from the day the chief of State ceased himself to respect manners, and himself instigated vices which it was his duty to repress. Julius Caesar, that great man whose genius raised the Roman power so high through arms, politics and legislation, Julius Caesar was the first to offer the Romans the corrupting spectacle of such depraved manners. It was said that he desired to prove by this that his ancestor, Aeneas, had transmitted to him something of Venus' blood. All the historians, Suetonius, Plutarch, Dion Cassius, agree that he was the mouthpiece of the pleasures of love and that he spared, in this matter, no expense: *prorum et sumptuosum una in libidines fuisse*, says Suetonius. He seduced a great number of distinguished women, such as Postumia, wife of Servius Sulpicius; Lollia, the wife of Aulus Gabinius; Tertulla, the wife of Marcus Crassus; and Marcia, the wife of Cneius Pompey; but he loved no woman better than Servilia, Brutus' mother. He gave her, during his first consulate, a pearl which had cost six million sesterces (1,162,500 francs),\* and at the time of the civil wars, in addition to the rich gifts with which he loaded her, he caused to be knocked down to her at a low price the finest farms that were sold at auction. When astonishment was expressed at these bargains, Cicero replied with the following epigram: "The price is all the more advantageous, seeing that a third has been deducted." This word play meant: "They have sold Tertia."\*\*\* There was a suspicion, as a matter of fact, that Servilia herself had favored scandalous relations between her daughter, Tertia, and her own lover. Caesar had no more respect for the conjugal bed in those provinces through which he passed with his army; after the conquest of the Gauls, on the day of his triumph, his soldiers chanted in unison:

*Urbani, servate uxores, moechum calvum adducimus!*  
*Aurum in Gallia effutuisti; at hic sumsisti mutuum.*

"Citizens, guard your wives well, for here we bring the baldheaded

\*Translator's Note:—About \$246,000.

\*\*Translator's Note:—*Tertius* (feminine: *tertia*): third.

libertine! Caesar, you have spent in love among the Gauls all the gold which you have gained at Rome!" Julius Caesar was the lover of a number of foreign queens, among others Eunoë, wife of the King of Mauretania. He loved, above all, and with passion, the voluptuous Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, who gave him a son whom he would have chosen to be his heir.

His venereal ardors had so increased, in place of diminishing, with the years, that he wanted all the women in the Roman Empire, and he would have liked to be able to dispose of them according to his own choice. He had conceived a singular legal project, which he was ashamed, however, to present for the sanction of the Senate; in accordance with this law, he reserved the right to marry as many women as he wished, in order to have as many children as he was capable of producing. The scandal resulting from his adulteries was so great, Suetonius tells us, that Curio the Elder, in one of his orations, had described Caesar as the *husband of all the wives and the wife of all the husbands*. The second part of this annihilating epigram was not, precisely, true, for according to history, Caesar did not more than once in his life give himself to vice against nature (this vice alone in the eyes of the Romans was an outrage to modesty); but this one unfortunate misstep of his was so widely bruited that an ineffaceable opprobrium was reflected upon his name throughout the entire world. The calumny undoubtedly arose from what may have been but an accident of debauchery, and which might have passed unperceived, if the two guilty parties had not been Julius Caesar and the King Nicomedes. Cicero tells us, in his letters, that Caesar was conducted by guards into the chamber of the King of Bithynia; that he slept there, covered with purple, on a couch of gold, and that this descendant of Venus prostituted his virginity to Nicomedes (*floremque ætatis a Venere orti in Bithynia contaminatum*). After this infamous affair, Caesar lived a butt to the bitterest ironies, but he bore them patiently, without replying and without giving his detractors the lie. On one occasion, Dolabella called him, in the Senate, the *concubine of a king*, the *Merry-Andrew of the royal couch*; again, the aged Curio referred to him as belonging to Nicomedes' *harem*, and as a *Bithynian prostitute*. One day, when Caesar had undertaken the defense of Nysa, the daughter of Nicomedes, Cicero interrupted him with a gesture of disgust, saying: "Let us pass over all that, I beg you; it is only too well known what you have received from Nicomedes and what you

have given him!" Another time, it was a certain Octavius who, with impunity, because he was looked upon as a fool, saluted Caesar with the title of *queen* and Pompey with the title of *king*. C. Memmius gives us to understand that he had seen the young Caesar serving Nicomedes at table and pouring wine for him, as though he were one of the King's eunuchs. Finally, when Caesar mounted the Capitoline, after the conquest of Gaul, the soldiers gaily chanted about his triumphal chariot: "Caesar has conquered the Gauls; Nicomedes has conquered Caesar. Caesar triumphs today for having conquered the Gauls; but Nicomedes does not triumph, he who has conquered Caesar."

Octavius was no better than Caesar, in the matter of immorality: "His reputation was branded from his youth with more than one opprobrium," we read in Suetonius. Sextus Pompey treated him as an effeminate; Mark Antony reproached him with having purchased at the price of his own honor, adoption by his uncle; Lucius, brother to Mark Antony, spread the report that Octavius, after having given his innocence to Caesar, sold it a second time in Spain to Hirtius for 300,000 sesterces (58,225 francs);\* Lucius adds that Octavius was in the custom of burning the flesh of his legs with the shells of hot nuts, in order that the hair might grow more slowly. Everyone threw up to him one day, with a malign joy, a verse which had been uttered on the stage to describe a priest of Cybele playing the tambourine: *Viden ut cinaedus orbem digito temperate?* The pun revolved about the word *orbem*, which might be understood at once as a tambourine, as the universe, and as the indecent parts which the finger of a vile *cinaedus* also "ruled." But later, Octavius refuted these accusations, which may have been calumnies, by the chastity of his manners with regard to a vice with which he could no longer be reproached after he had attained the age of man. As to his manners from another point of view, they were far from being chaste or even reserved. He appeared to have inherited the amorous fury of Julius Caesar toward all women. Despite his laws against adultery, he was not so severe toward himself as toward others, and he did not spare the nuptial honor of his subjects. Mark Antony asserted that he had been the witness of a singular instance of the Emperor's amours: in the midst of a meal, Augustus sent from the dining-room to a neighboring bedroom the wife of a Roman of consular rank, although the husband of this

\**Translator's Note*:—Approximately \$12,300.



woman was among the invited guests; and when she came back with Augustus, after having given the guests time to empty more than one goblet to the glory of Caesar, the lady's ears were red and her hair in disorder. The husband alone took no notice. Before Mark Antony had declared himself the Emperor's enemy and competitor, he wrote to him familiarly: "What has changed you then? Is it the idea that I possess a Queen? But Cleopatra is my wife, and not a wife of yesterday, for it has been nine years. But are you not content with Livia? Yes, you are such a man that I think you will be capable, when you read this letter, of taking Tertulla or Terentilla or Ruffilla or Salvia Titiscenia or perhaps all of them. Does it make much difference in what place and how your desires are awakened?" (*Anne refert ubi et in quam arrigas?*)

Nevertheless, however great the Emperor's own incontinence may have been, he had a certain repugnance for adultery, which impressed him as being a social sore, and which he rigorously endeavored to combat by certain laws. When he permitted himself to commit a refraction of his own legislation, he spared no precaution in hiding a weakness for which he blushed and which he would not confess to his most intimate confidant. Thus, we see the poet Ovid paying with his own disgrace for having been the witness of the incestuous amours of the Emperor with his daughter Julia. Augustus undoubtedly did not have to fear any indiscretion on the part of this faithful servitor, who was his rival, or who was looked upon as being; but he did not care to run the risk of having to look constantly in the face a man before whom he had been dishonored. In his youth, these scruples would not have troubled him, since his friends, according to Suetonius, spent their time in seeking out for him married women and marriageable daughters, whom they had brought in nude before them in order to examine them like slaves on sale in the market of Toranius. These sad objects of imperial lust must, before they were chosen and approved, fulfill certain conditions dictated by the whims of Augustus, who was curious as to the most secret details of their beauty. It is thus that commentators have interpreted those words, *conditiones quaesitas*, which the historian has left, in a manner, under a transparent veil. Augustus' enthusiasm for sensual pleasure did not cool with age, but he ceased to take his mistresses from among the mothers of families, who no longer inspired in him the same desires, but he fell back exclusively upon the virgins (*ad vitiandas virgines promptior*);

they were brought to him from all sides, and his wife even took a hand in introducing them to him. This species of madness could not last always, and old age brought with it some sort of order. It was then that the passion for women was succeeded by one for gambling, less fatiguing but not less insatiable than the other. Augustus, as he played at dice, would still smile at the throw of Venus (*three sixes*), which made a royal pair, as he remarked gaily in a letter to Tiberius.

The immoderate fondness for virgins, which he indulged in the latter part of his life, came only upon the decline of his virility. So long as he felt young and vigorous, he had lived with his first wife, Claudia, who was scarcely marriageable, without claiming the rights of a husband; for she was no less a virgin than on the eve of her marriage. He finally separated from her to marry Scribonia, the widow of two consuls. He likewise repudiated Scribonia, on account of the perverse practices of this mother of a family. He married, for a third time, Livia Drusilla, whom he had taken away from Tiberius Nero, by whom she was pregnant; he loved her constantly, despite his perpetual infidelities, which he did not even take the pains to hide. Satisfied at being loved above all the rest, Livia did not look upon all the venal women who succeeded her in her husband's arms as rivals. However enormous the excesses of Augustus in his old age may have been, they were always cast in the shade, in the opinion of the public, by those of his youth. There had been much talk, in particular, of a certain mysterious supper which was commonly known as the *Feast of the Twelve Divinities*, a supper at which the guests, clad as gods and goddesses, imitated the indecent scenes which ancient poetry had located on Olympus, under the influence of the ambrosia which Hebe and Ganymede poured. In this orgy, Octavius had portrayed Apollo, and an anonymous satirist immortalized these obscene impieties in the following famous verses: "When Caesar dared take the mask of Apollo and celebrate at a feast the adulteries of the gods, the indignant gods retired far from the domain of mortals, and Jupiter himself abandoned his gilded temples." This supper, the details of which were never well known, coincided with the famine to which Rome was then a prey: "The gods have eaten all the wheat!" remarked the Romans, on learning that Olympus had supped in Caesar's palace: "If Caesar is, in truth, the god Apollo," murmured the more daring ones, "he is Apollo the executioner." The god was adored under the name of *Tortor*, in a quarter of the city where instruments of torture

were sold, among others, lashes. According to one scholiast, this insulting epithet was applied to Augustus by allusion to a rôle which he had played in these nocturnal revels.

The orgies of Augustus were naïve and innocent compared to those which were the distraction of the old Tiberius. This Emperor, who had been led gradually, through his passion for drink, into the most hideous vices, still prided himself on being the reformer of Roman manners; he improved upon the severity of the laws which his predecessor had enacted against adultery; he reestablished the ancient custom of causing sentence to be pronounced on women who had been unfaithful to the marriage bond, in an assemblage of their relatives, who must vote unanimously; as to husbands who shut their eyes upon the scandalous conduct of their wives, he forced them to repudiate with much show their immodest mates; he exiled to the desert islands those patrician women who had had themselves registered as prostitutes in order to be free to follow their own licentious inclinations; he banished from Rome those young libertines of free condition who, in order to obtain the right of appearing in the theater or in the arena, had voluntarily requested of a tribunal the brand of infamy. But he himself took no account of the austere prescriptions of his own jurisprudence, and his object appeared to be to commit crimes or acts of baseness which had not been thought of before his time. His acts as a supreme magistrate and his mode of life presented, incessantly, the strangest of contradictions; one day, in the Senate, he harshly apostrophized Sestius Gallus, a prodigal and libidinous old man, who had been branded by Augustus; and a few moments later, in leaving, he invited himself to take supper at the house of this old libertine upon condition that there should be no change in the customs of the house, and that the meal should be served, as usual, by naked young girls (*nudis puellis ministrantibus*). Another time, while he was laboring for the reform of manners, he passed two days and a night at a table with Pomponius Flaccus and L. Piso, whom he recompensed for their infamous entertainment by naming one governor of Syria and the other prefect of Rome, referring to them, in his letters patent, as "those most delightful friends at all hours." He punished with death the man or woman who did not yield at once to his indecent desires. It was to avenge himself for a refusal of this sort that he had the beautiful Malonnia, who preferred death to shame, accused by his informers. During the trial, he besought her to repent,

but she killed herself with a sword, after having cried out that the Emperor was "an old man with an obscene mouth, hairy and stinking as a goat." And so, at the first games which were celebrated after this tragic adventure, all the spectators applauded on applying to Tiberius this passage of an *atellana*.\* "An old goat licking the she-goats (*hircum vetulum capreis naturam ligurire*).” The people had nicknamed the emperor *Caprineus*, alluding at once to his goat-like manners and to his habit of dwelling in the island of Capri.

Following is the account which Suetonius gives of the abominable life which this monster led in the seclusion of his retreat: "He conceived a great chamber which he made the scene of his most secret debaucheries. There, chosen troops of young girls and young boys, directed by the inventors of a monstrous form of Prostitution, and whom he called *spinthriæ* (sparks), formed a triple chain and, mutually enlaced, passed in front of him, in order, by this spectacle, to revive his exhausted senses. He had, also, a number of chambers variously arranged for the same purpose; he adorned these rooms with pictures and bas-reliefs representing the most lascivious subjects; he assembled here the books of Elephantis, in order that the model might not be lacking for the circumstance (*ne cui in opera edenda exemplar imperatæ schemæ deesset*). In the woods and in the forest were to be seen nothing but asylums consecrated to Venus, and it was his desire that the grottoes and the hollows of the rocks should constantly afford him a view of amorous couples in the costumes of nymphs and satyrs. . . . He carried his baseness still further, to a degree of excess which it would be as difficult to believe as to describe: he had infants of the tenderest age, whom he called his *little fish*—*ut natanti sibi inter femina versarentur ac luderent, lingua morsuque sensim appetentes, atque etiam, quali infantes firmiores, necdum tamen lacte depulsos, inguini ceu papillæ admooveret*—a species of pleasure to which his age and his temperament made him prone. Thus, some one having left him by legacy that picture of Parrhasius in which Atlantis prostitutes her mouth to Meleager, and the will giving him the right to take, in place of this picture, if the subject should prove displeasing to him, a million sesterces\*\* (193,750 francs), he preferred the picture, and had it placed as a sacred object in his bedroom. It was said, also, that one day, during the sacrifice, he was taken with the beauty of a young lad

\*Translator's Note:—Old popular farce.

\*\*Translator's Note:—\$41,000.



who was bearing the incense; he could barely wait till the ceremony was achieved in order to satisfy his ignoble passion, to which, also, the brother of the unhappy lad, whom he had remarked playing the flute, was forced to lend himself; then, when the brothers reproached each other with their disgrace, he had their legs cut off." The physical portrait of Tiberius completes the picture of his manners: "He was large and robust, of a height above the ordinary, large of shoulders and breast, well built and well proportioned. He was more adroit with and stronger in the left hand than in the other; the joints were so strong that with them he could pierce a green apple, and with a fillip he could dent the head of a child or even that of a young man. . . . His face was handsome, but subject to being suddenly covered with pimples. . . ."

Caligula, still less reserved than Tiberius, whom he endeavored to imitate, brazenly advertised his infamous amours with Marcus Lepidus, the comedian, Mnester, and a number of hostages with whom he had had mutual relations (*commercio mutui stupri*). Valerius Catullus, son of an ex-consul, reproached him one day with having abused his youth (*stupratum ase ac latera sibi contubernio ejus defessa, etiam vociferatus est*); but, gross and brutal in his pleasures, he did not vary them with any effort at refinement, and it was gluttony rather than lust which inspired the disorders of his imagination. He sought the extraordinary and the monstrous. "Without speaking of his incests with his sisters and of his well-known passion for the courtesan, Pyrallis," Suetonius relates, "he did not respect any woman of high distinction (*non temere ulla illustriore femina abstinuit*)." Ordinarily, he would invite these ladies to supper with their husbands, and there, making them pass in front of him, would examine them long and minutely, in the fashion of slave merchants. Then, after a number of sallies, leaving the banquet hall with the one who had pleased him, he would bring her back soon, without any effort to hide the stains of his recent debauch, and would praise or criticize in a high tone of voice the unfortunate one, whose beauties or bodily perfections he would enumerate, along with his own exploits. He divorced a few in the name of their absent husbands, and he caused these divorces to be inserted among the public acts. "Moreover, Caligula's exploits of this sort were overshadowed by his ingenious cruelties, by his foolish expenditures and by his pitiless exactions. Among the weird and ignoble taxes which he levied at Rome, we must cite the *vectigal* of Prostitution; each prostitute was taxed according to the amount which she demand-

ed for the sale of her body (*ex captivis prostitutarum, quantum quaeque uno concubitu mereret*).” The Emperor afterwards added to this chapter of the law a provision to the effect that a similar tax might be exacted of all, men and women, who had led the lives of *lenones* and *meretrices*. It is to be understood that the fixing of the amount of this tax could not have been other than arbitrary and optional.

But one of the most singular incidents of the reign of Caligula is the foundation and opening of a lupanar in the palace of the Caesars. This monstrous fact, which is reported by Dion Cassius and by Suetonius, has impressed a number of critics as being so unlikely that they have seen a corruption of the text in that passage which Dion, in their opinion, had confidently copied from Suetonius, amplifying and poetizing upon the original. According to these critics, it was a matter of a gambling house and not of a lupanar. Dion merely adds that Caligula had taken from the Gauls the idea of his imperial lupanar. “He established a lupanar in the palace; there, a great number of cells were constructed and adorned according to the convenience of the place; and these cells were occupied by matrons and *ingenuae*. The Emperor sent his criers around to the public places and the basilicas in order to invite young people and old men to debauchery (*in libidinem*). The arrivals were called upon to borrow money at usury and the names of those were taken who paid most, as though they were subscribing thus to increase the revenues of Caesar.” These details are, as a matter of fact, very vague and very obscure; they are applicable to a gambling house rather than to a lupanar, and nothing is said, especially, of that loan which awaited the new-comers who had been recruited by the criers on the public highway. Suetonius would understand, by this, that the price of this Prostitution, under the guaranty of the emperor was so great that no one had enough silver upon his person to pay for it. What makes us suppose that this supposed lupanar was but a gambling house, directed by the matrons and the sons of families (*ingenui*), is that Suetonius adds immediately certain details which could only have to do with games of chance (*alea*), in which Caligula made use of fraud and perjury in order to be sure of always being the winner.

However this may be, if the employment of the prefect of pleasures (*a voluptatibus*), an office created by Tiberius, lasted till the reign of Nero, it is certain that the imperial lupanar did not last beyond the time of Caligula, who had invented it, and who drew large benefits

from it. His successor, Claudius, was not less cruel, nor less sanguinary than himself, but he did not achieve such indecent triumphs. He had too many legitimate wives to have many mistresses, and those whom he took, out of caprice rather than out of love, did not gain sufficient notoriety for history to speak of them. Suetonius, who is careful to record the marriages and divorces of Claudius, while flaying the shameful debaucheries (*libidinum probra*) of his first wife, Urgulannilla, and the startling outbursts of the third, Messalina—Suetonius forms a general judgment with regard to the morals of this Emperor: "He loved women passionately, but he had no relations with men (*libidinis in feminas profussissimae, marium omnino expers*).” Whatever the habits of Claudius may otherwise have been, they were far from equalling those of this Messalina who has been immortalized by Juvenal (see the famous fragment of Satire VI) and whose name has become, in all languages, the synonym of the most brazen Prostitution. We must look to Tacitus for the recital of the crimes and obscenities of this Empress (Book XI), who had dared, during the life of the Emperor, to be publicly married to Silius and to celebrate this adulterous marriage by an orgy in which she played the role of bacchante. Despite the identity of a courtesan named Lysisca, who resembled Messalina, and who had passed herself off as the latter in the practice of her trade as a prostitute, we shall not undertake to prove that Messalina has been slandered by history, and that a fatal resemblance alone has been the cause of her infamous celebrity.

The example of Messalina appears to have encouraged Nero to surpass his predecessors in the crimes of Prostitution. As soon as he had raised the mask which disguised his evil inclinations, he hurled himself into all the excesses which the refinements of debauchery had been able to conceive, and gave free reign to all his vices. At first, he still imposed some restraint in giving himself to debauchery, to lust and to his nervous passions, which might have been overlooked as the vagaries of youth. As soon as night fell, he would cover his head with the bonnet of a freed-man or with the cape of a muleteer in order to run about the wine-shops and suspect places. He would wander through the streets, insulting women, giving worse insults to the men, and striking all who resisted him. He compromised himself thus with the vilest prostitutes, with the most unworthy lenons; he beat them often and sometimes was himself beaten. This was, as he put it, a clever manner of studying the people at close range and of learning to

live the life of a simple citizen. As the keepers of the lupanars, the masters of slaves, the proprietors of the wine-shops and the bakers had threatened to break his bones, he did not go out anymore without being followed at a distance by an armed guard, who would come at need to lend him forcible assistance. But he soon came to disdain such concealment, and took pleasure, on the contrary, in advertising his vices to all the world, without worrying about scandal or blame. Thus, we see him supping in public, either on the Field of Mars or in the great Circus, and there he had himself served by all the prostitutes of Rome and by foreign flute-players (*inter scortorum totius urbis ambubaiarumque ministeria*).

This was not all; every time he went to Ostium by way of the Tiber, or every time he sailed around the Gulf of Baiae, they would set up along the banks hostelrys and places of debauchery where matrons, playing the rôle of mistresses of the inn, would cajolingly invite him to pause. He would stop frequently, and his trip would thus be prolonged for a number of weeks. One prefect of pleasures did not suffice for him; he appointed, in addition, an Arbiter of pleasure, and this was Petronius, who appears to have filled this difficult place to Nero's satisfaction. He was not only the arbiter of pleasure, but also of elegance (*elegantiae arbiter*, says Tacitus), and Tigellinus could not pardon him for being so clever in the science of pleasure (*scientiâ voluptatum potiozem*). One cannot believe, however, that Petronius *arbiter* would have approved the abominable obscenities which the Emperor permitted himself without the least hesitation, as soon as the idea came to him. Tacitus, Suetonius, Xiphilinus and Aurelius Victor have spoken of these infamies; but in this hideous picture, they have avoided painting in detail the vile ones who shared the imperial orgy or who seconded the Emperor in his turpitudes. Suetonius, after having mentioned Nero's pederastic relations and his adulteries with married women, accuses him, simply, of having violated the Vestal, Rubria. He is more explicit with regard to the Emperor's execrable marriage with Sporus and his incest with his mother.

Sporus was a young lad of incomparable beauty; Nero fell hopelessly in love with him and he wished that Sporus had been a woman; he endeavored, by a detestable freak of the imagination, to change the sex of the young man, whom he caused to be mutilated (*ex sectis testibus etiam in muliebrem transfigurare conatus*). Then, having given Sporus a dowry and adorned him with a nuptial veil like a bride, he



went through a pompous marriage ceremony in which he espoused his Sporus (*celeberrimo officio deductum ad se pro uxore habuit*), under the gaze of a numerous assemblage, which applauded this odious masquerade. Someone who was present permitted himself a bon mot, which might have cost him dearly: "It would have been better for the human race if the father of Nero, Domitius, had taken such a wife!" Nero remained a long time enamoured of Sporus, whom he clad in the costumes of his empresses, and whom he had no shame in being seen with in public; he traveled into Greece with his *giton* and upon his return to Rome, showed himself in a litter with him during the festivals, where they were to be seen embracing at every moment (*identidem exosculans*). As to his mother, Agrippina, it was she, according to Tacitus, who first had aroused Nero's passions, by way of putting a good face on an indecent liaison of her own; but Nero, even while he was abandoning himself wholly to criminal amours, would not give his accomplice the power she desired, and he was not slow in tiring of the importunities which he had brought down upon himself as a punishment for his incest. According to Suetonius, he had been foolishly in love with Agrippina, without arriving at the accomplishment of his guilty desires, either because Agrippina had the cleverness and the ability to keep him at a respectful distance, or rather, because he had been dissuaded by his confidants, who made him understand the danger of placing himself thus under the subjection of an imperious woman. He preserved always, with regard to his mother, a libertine intention which translated itself into indecent actions when he rode in the litter with her. (*Olim etiam, quoties lectica cum matre veheretur, libidinum inceste, ac maculis vestis proditum, affirmant*). What is more, in order to carry out the illusion, he took as one of his concubines a courtesan who singularly resembled Agrippina.

Nero prided himself upon being a poet, and he was attracted by all the poetic fictions which led him into incredible fits of erotic fury; thus, he endeavored to imitate the metamorphoses of the gods by clothing himself in the skins of wild beasts and hurling himself, sometimes as a wolf, sometimes as a lion, sometimes as a swan, and sometimes as a bull, on women or men, chained or free, whom he bit, clawed and mutilated at his pleasure (*suam quidem pudicitiam usque adeo prostituit, ut contaminatis paene omnibus membris, novissime quasi genus lusus excogitaret, quo ferae pelle contextus emitteretur e cavea, virorumque ac faeminarum ad stipitem deligatorum inguina*

*invaderet*). He revived, in this manner, the fable of Andromeda, of Leda, of Io and of many other famous ones of the heroic ages. Then, exulted by these obscene masquerades, he became persuaded that the favoring gods had changed him into a woman, and he gave himself to his freedman, Diophorus, imitating the cries of a young virgin. (*Et quum affatim desaevisset, conficeretur a Doryphoro liberto, cui etiam, sicut ipsi Sporus, ita ipse denupsit, voces quoque et ejaculatus vim patientium virginum imitatus.*) Such a monster had not arrived at this apex of villainy without causing the contempt which he had for himself to be shared by all humanity; he was convinced that no man was absolutely chaste nor free from physical defilement (*neminem hominem pudicum, aut ulla corporis parte purum esse*), but he thought that the majority knew how to dissimulate their vices and to hide them cleverly. "Thus," says Suetonius, "he pardoned all other faults to anyone who confessed his lubricity to him." This wretched Emperor well deserved to die, weeping, in the arms of the infamous Sporus. The latter did not mingle his blood with that of his companion in debauchery, whom he detested; for Nero had a body all covered with spots and ulcers, which exhaled an infectious odor, and which were the result of the life he had led. It was his concubine, Acte, who tearfully laid his ashes to rest, in the tomb of the Domitians.

Galba, although he claimed descent from Pasiphaë and her bull, did not possess the temperament or the degree of health necessary to go on with Nero's enormous excesses. He was extremely thin, despite the promise of his name, which meant *large* in the Gallic language, and this hectic emaciation suggested the infamy of his habits: he preferred to young men those who were robust and even old (*libidinus in mares pronioris, et eos, non nisi praeduros, exoletosque*). When Icilus, one of his former male concubines (*veteribus concubinis*) came to him in Spain to bring the news of Nero's death, the story is told that, not content with embracing him indecently in front of everyone, he caused him to be depilated and led him away to bed (*non modo artissimis osculis palam exceptum ab eo, sed ut sine morâ velleretur, oratum atque seductum*).

Otho, who did not leave Galba time to *enjoy his youth*, as the camp followers of the army said as they bore the Emperor's head on the end of a lance, was a pupil and accomplice of Nero; from his infancy, he had been prodigal and debauched, a frequenter of bad houses and given to all excesses. At the age of ambition, he attached himself, for

worldly reasons, to a freedwoman of the court, who thought much of him, and he even pretended to be in love with her, although she was old and decrepit. It was by this means that he insinuated himself into the good graces of Nero, to whom he rendered ignominious services. He broke, however, with the Emperor on account of Poppaea, whom they quarreled over, and whom Otho was obliged to abandon to his stronger rival. It may be supposed that his morals had only become more corrupt with the years; and his manners of life may be gleaned from a description of his toilet, which bore witness to his effeminate tastes: "He had his whole body depilated and wore upon his head, which was almost bald, false hair, fixed and arranged with so much art that no one could perceive it. He shaved his face every day with great care and massaged himself with moistened bread, a habit he had contracted when his throat first came to be covered with a light down, in order that he might never have a beard."

But Otho, proclaimed Emperor at Rome, barely had the time to order a few secret orgies in the palace of the Caesars; he had to march to meet Vitellius, who came to dispute his title to the Empire, and he slew himself with his own hand, after three successive defeats, although his small figure and his feminine exterior did not promise so much courage. Vitellius, his conqueror and his successor, had been dishonored in his youth by his passion for a freedwoman, whose saliva, mixed with honey, he was in the habit of swallowing as a sovereign remedy against sore throat, to which he was subject. He had been, moreover, reared in the school of Prostitution; for he had passed his infancy at Capri, among Tiberius' favorites, and he remained branded with the name of *Spinthria*, for the reason that he had directed the *spinthriae* of the aged Emperor. He continued to defile himself with the same infamies, after he had reached the age of an old bull, as he himself said jokingly, and he became, in turn, the companion of Caligula, of Claudius and of Nero; but from then on, he was violently smitten with a freedman, named Asiaticus, who had been his immoral companion at Capri (*mutua libidine constupratum*), but who sought always to escape him without being able to do so. Vitellius would find him again, sometimes selling sour wine to the muleteers, sometimes fighting among the gladiators, and as soon as he had laid eyes on the fellow once more, he would be moved by the shameful memories of his youth, and would lay hold again of this none too willing victim and seek to win him by presents and honors; he made of his

Asiaticus a Governor of a province and a knight! When old age had rendered him obese, he sacrificed lust to gluttony, declaring that the stomach was the most obliging and the strongest part of the body, as opposed to the others, which grew weak with use. He so developed the capacity of his stomach that he could eat almost without interruption, when he was not sleeping, and his insatiable gluttony was renewed at all hours from the habit he had of not waiting to vomit until the work of digestion had commenced; he might thus, every day, enjoy four meals, which filled the day and a part of the night. His senses grew heavy and only awakened at intervals, in the midst of these continual feasts, where he rarely invoked Venus as he emptied enormous goblets and devoured whole lampreys. His fearful corpulence, his face red and pimply, his protruding abdomen and his frail legs proclaimed the fact that he had spent at table all the days of his reign, and that he had not tired himself by running after the fugitive pleasures of love.

After having had a voracious Emperor, Rome had an avaricious one, who abstained from the ruinous excesses of his predecessors, and who did not fall into their ill repute. Vespasian, while persecuting the Christians, could not help, despite himself, undergoing the influence of Christians. He understood that the dignity of man called for a certain restraint in manners, and that the chief of state must, to a certain degree, set the example in the matter of that respect which it was the duty of each to show to public opinion. The State was the basic principle of this quasi-Christian philosophy which Vespasian put into practice; his cold and austere temperament permitted him to be on good terms with morality. He combatted debauchery by a few sage rules, and especially by his own decent and regular mode of life. He lived, however, in concubinage after the death of his wife, Flavia Domitilla, with a former mistress named Cenis, a freed-woman of Antonia, the mother of Clodius, to whom she had served as secretary; but this illegitimate alliance had become, in time, as respectable as a marriage sanctioned by the law, and Cenis held with the Emperor the rank of a true spouse. Vespasian himself remained faithful to her, not only because he loved her, but more so for the reason that he loved no other. And yet, Suetonius tells us that one woman feigned for him a violent passion and ended by triumphing over his disdain and persuading him that she would inevitably die if she did not obtain from him a proof of his regard. This proof having been granted, Vespasian



relaxed his accustomed avarice to the point of paying the lady 400,000 sesterces (77,500 francs), and this in honor of the novelty of the thing. His steward asking him how he should enter the sum in the royal accounts: "Put it," said Vespasian, "*For a passion inspired by the Emperor (Vespasiano, ait, adamato).*" Altogether chaste in manners, Vespasian stooped occasionally to gross pleasantries, and did not even refrain from obscene expressions (*praetextatis verbis*).

Titus, before succeeding his father, Vespasian, had won for himself the worst reputation in Rome, where his cruelty and his intemperance had alienated the popular sympathies; he prolonged to the middle of the night his debauches at table with the most dissolute of his acquaintances; he was always to be seen surrounded by a troop of eunuchs or of effeminate (*exoletorum et spadonum gerges*); he was accused also of rapacity, and it was said, openly, that he would be another Nero; but he changed suddenly, as soon as he had ascended the throne, and reigned like a philosopher, conforming himself, without knowing it, to the precepts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: unlike his father, he did not persecute the Christians, who beheld in him the model of all the Christian virtues, and so, he was wept by all his people when he died suddenly, declaring that he had never done in all his life but one action which he repented. Suetonius supposes that this was a culpable liaison with Domitia, the wife of Titus' brother, but the Emperor always protested his innocence, calling upon the gods to be his witness: "She was not the woman to deny such a relation," the historian adds. "If it had existed, she would have been the first to boast of it, as of all her infamies."

Domitia did not deny her adulterous relations with the actor, Paris, whom she loved to distraction; and Domitian, proclaimed Emperor, was obliged to repudiate her, or at least to send her away for a time, in order to satisfy public indignation. He took her back soon, declaring that, despite all the carryings on of this second Messalina, he could not do without her, and that she took the place of a hundred mistresses. He had given Domitia a rival, however; it was the daughter of his brother, Titus; he had seduced her and taken her away from her husband, even while Titus lived. He manifested for her the most unbridled passion, and he was the cause of her death by forcing her to submit to an abortion, being doubtful himself of the paternity of the child. He was, otherwise, all too given to the pleasures of love, which he called "bedroom gymnastics" (*libidinis nimiae, assiduitatem con-*

*cubitus, velut exercitationis genus, Plyeopalen vocabat*). We are assured that he liked himself to depilate his concubines, when he was not engaged in impaling flies upon a needle, and he bathed himself in vast *piscinae* along with the vilest prostitutes (*nataretque inter vulgarissimas meretrices*). All the time, despite his debauchery, Domitian was occupied with the reform of manners, and insisted upon the application of a number of ancient police laws, which had fallen into desuetude; thus, while Clodius Pollio, nicknamed the One-Eyed, was circulating a copy of an autographed note in which Domitian, then young and given to infamous vices, promised him a night (*noctem sibi pollicentis*), the Emperor was condemning, by virtue of the *lex Scantinia*, a number of Roman knights who had been convicted of the crime of pederasty. It was he who forbade dishonored women the use of the litter (*probosis feminis lecticae usum ademit*), and who established terrible penalties against incest with Vestals; he caused to be interred alive the great Vestal, Cornelia, who had more than one accomplice, and these accomplices were beaten with rods until death followed; other Vestals, the sisters Ocellata and Varronilla, had the liberty of choosing their manner of death, and their seducers went into exile. Finally, Domitian, undoubtedly ashamed at casting a reflection upon himself, erased from the list of judges a Roman knight who had taken back his wife after having repudiated her, and caused the woman herself to be hauled before the tribunal as an adulteress.

But Evangelic morality was dawning on all sides, and Paganism appeared to be blushing for its own prostitutions, justified by the false gods. Christian philosophy had been infiltrated in the doctrine of Plato; and the emperors, who held it an honor to be philosophers, applied themselves to correcting their own vices and to putting a bridle on their own passions. Thus, the old Nerva who, according to Suetonius, had corrupted the young Domitian; Trajan, who loved young boys, which Xiphilinus does not condemn; Hadrian, who would have sacrificed his Empire for his favorite, Antinous, whom he deified, and who was looked upon as the most refined of voluptuaries (*quae adulterum amore ac nuptiarum adulteriis, quibus Adrianus laborasse dicitur, asserunt*); these three Emperors yet reigned as sages and labored to rebuild Roman society on the basis of decency, justice, modesty and religion, the influence of the new faith. Antoninus the Pious and Marcus Aurelius were truly Christian Emperors, and under their glorious reigns, one might have believed that the Gospel was

about to become the universal code of humanity. But paganism, stemmed in its material tendencies and organically degenerate, still had to make one last stand under Commodus and under Heliogabalus, in an effort to drag the Roman world into the final Saturnalia of Prostitution.

## CHAPTER XXIX

THE family of the Antonii, after having given the imperial throne two great philosophers who endeavored to regenerate the pagan world with morality, had to produce the infamous Commodus and find extinction with Heliogabalus. The abominations of these two last reigns provide a sorrowful contrast with the fine virtues of an Antoninus and a Marcus Aurelius, who even caused their glorious predecessors, Trajan and Hadrian, to be forgotten. Marcus Aurelius had foreseen that his son Commodus would one day be like Nero, Caligula and Domitian; and he regretted that he had not died before this fatal premonition was realized. If it had been, merely, a matter of bad manners, his father would have shut his eyes on what was no more than something ordinarily to be found in a youth of temperament; thus Marcus Antonius tolerated the licentious life of his adopted son, Lucius Verus, whom he had associated with him in the government of the Empire but who, he knew, was given to all the sensual pleasures; but Lucius Verus, in throwing himself into debaucheries with dancing girls, buffoons and courtezans, took care to shut himself up in his palace and never presented outside the palace anything but a decent, honorable and almost austere appearance. The excesses of his private life had no influence upon his public life, and he might appear at Marcus Aurelius' side without tainting that virtuous emperor with the scandal of his own vices.

But Commodus, on the contrary, would not have been satisfied if his base habits had not made him notorious; it was for him a pleasure and a necessity to appear vile in the eyes of all. Moreover, lustful abuse had super-excited his senses to such a degree that he had to have recourse to an effusion of blood; he was naturally cruel, and with him, cruelty developed into a brutal passion which mingled with all the transports of erotic fury. "From his tenderest infancy," we are told by Lampridius, who in his writings followed Greek and Latin historians who are lost today, "from his earliest infancy, he was immodest, wicked, cruel and libidinous, and he even defiled his mouth." (*Turpis, improbus, crudelis, libidinosus, ore quoque pollutus, constupratus fuit.*) And yet, a short time after he had taken the *toga virilis*, on his return from the expedition in Egypt, where he had accom-



panied his father, he shared triumphal honors with the divine Marcus Aurelius. He then dismissed the sages and worthy preceptors who had been given him and surrounded himself with the most corrupt men; his friends were taken away from him momentarily, but when he fell ill from disappointment on this account, they were given back to him, and from that time on, he no longer made any effort to restrain his obscene inclinations. He made of the palace a tavern and a place of debauchery (*popinas et ganeas in palatinis semper aedibus fecit*); he gathered about him those women who were the most remarkable for their beauty, in the capacity of slaves attached to a lupanar, in order to serve all his indecent fancies (*mulierculas formae scitioris, ut prostibula mancipia lupanarium, ad ludibrium pudicitiae contraxit*). Finally, he lived with gladiators and *meretrices*; he haunted the houses of prostitution and, disguised as a eunuch, entered the cells of the women in order to bring water or refreshments (*aquam gessit ut lenonum magister*).

When Marcus Aurelius died at Rome, Commodus made war upon the barbarians on the banks of the Danube, but he sighed incessantly for the delights of Italy; he hastened, then, to leave his soldiers, who had saluted him as Emperor, and he was received with acclamation by the Romans, who did not remember the vices of his youth, as they looked upon him and saw that he was so handsome and well built: "There was nothing effeminate in his manner," says Herodian, "his glance was at once gentle and vivacious; his hair curled and very blond; when he walked in the sun, his hair cast a gleam so dazzling that it seemed it had been powdered with gold." But this radiant beauty, which had no equal, if we are to believe Herodian, was soon withered in orgies, where Commodus was guided less by his strength than by his insatiable desires; his robust constitution could not resist continual assaults, and he soon found himself a weak man, his back bent, his head trembling, his complexion pimply, his eyes red and his lips slobbering. He even had, as the result of a number of shameful maladies, so large a tumor on his groins that it showed through his silken garments. On the day of his entry into Rome, while the enthusiasm of the people was centered especially upon his charming face and manly bearing, he had, mounted behind him on his chariot, his boy (*subactore suo*), Anterus, and during the whole of the triumphal ceremony, he was constantly turning to exchange kisses with this vile person; and their ignoble caresses were kept up in the theatre, to the applause of the spectators.

Commodus took up, from the start, the life which he had led during his father's lifetime; in the evening he made the rounds of the taverns and the bad houses (*vespera etiam per tabernas ac lupanaria volitavit*); at night, he would drink till dawn in the company of Anterus and his other favorites. As to the affairs of Empire, he left the care of these to Perennis, who persuaded him to think only of his own pleasures, and who freed him of the burdens of government; this was an agreement entered into between them when Commodus lost Anterus, whom the praetorian prefects had caused to be assassinated in order to escape that favorite's tyrannic whims. Commodus could not console himself for this loss except by plunging into still stranger pleasures; he almost never showed himself any more in public; he lived shut up in the palace, where he had assembled three hundred concubines, chosen for their beauty by his purveyors, and who had been selected indifferently among the matrons and the prostitutes. To these concubines he had added, for his own use, three hundred *cinaedi* chosen equally among the nobility and the people, and not less remarkable than the women for the perfection of their bodies. These six hundred guests sat at his table and offered in turn their obscene services (*in palatio per convivia et balneas bacchatur*). When physical strength failed him, he called to his aid all the powers of his imagination; he obliged his concubines to give themselves under his eyes to pleasures which he was no longer capable of sharing with them (*ipsas concubinas suas sub oculis suis stuprari jubebat*). These voluptuous tableaux had the power of reviving his exhausted senses, and he would become once more an actor in these monstrous bacchanalia, where there was no longer any distinction of sex, and where Prostitution had recourse to the most horrible artifices (*nec irruentium in se juvenum carebat infamia, omni parte corporis atque ore in sexum utrumque pollutus*). It was no longer, as with Tiberius and Nero, an attempt to assuage tremendous physical passions; it was, rather, the indefatigable quest of a depraved imagination, the only object of which was to restore life to the Emperor's failing senses. Thus, Commodus tortured his mind to invent, in the guise of philtres, the most odious combinations of obscenities. After having violated his sisters and his relatives, he gave the name of his mother to one of his concubines in order to persuade himself that he was committing incest with her. He did not spare any of those who were attached to his person, and he submitted them to shameful tasks without refusing to be a party to such tasks himself

(*omne genus hominum infamavit quod erat secum et ab omnibus est infamatus*). Woe to the one who permitted himself to laugh or mock; he sent to the beasts the untimely jester. "He loved by preference," says Lampridius, "those who bore the names of the shameful parts of one or the other sex, and he embraced these by preference." (*Habuit in deliciis homines appellatos nominibus verendorum utriusque sexus, quos libentius suis osculis applicabat*). A variation of the Latin text, *oculis* in place of *osculis*, occurs in this passage, giving us to understand that he was content with looking on them with more curiosity than those who bore respectable names. Among his boon companions, he had picked out a freed-man whom he called Onon (*onos*, an ass), on account of a certain unmentionable analogy with that animal; he enriched him and made him the high priest of Hercules of the Fields, as a reward of merit. (*Habuit et hominem pene prominente ultra modum animalium, quem Onon appellavit, sibi, clarissimum*). He had himself named *Hercules* by the Senate, which had already decreed him the surnames of *Pious* and *Fortunate*.

One cannot depict, without horror, the debauches, stained with human blood, which this apotheosized monster practiced with a sort of infernal genius; he did not respect even the temples of the gods (*deorum templa stupris polluit et humano sanguine*). He loved to wear women's clothes and to put on feminine airs; sometimes he would dress himself like Hercules in a garment embossed with gold and a lion's skin: "It was a ridiculous and a weird thing," says Herodian, "for him thus to make a parade, at once, of feminine affectations and of the strength of heroes." At these feasts, he frequently mingled excrements with the most delicate viands and he did not hesitate to taste these dishes himself in order to have the pleasure of forcing others to eat them (*dicitur saepe pretiosissimis cibis humana stercora miscuisse, nec abstinuisse gustu, aliis, ut putabat irrisis*). The faces which the guests made as they imitated him gave him a malicious and boundless pleasure. One day, he ordered a prefect of the Julian praetorium to take off his clothes and dance nude, his face smeared, and playing the cymbals, in front of the courtezans and *gitones*, who applauded hugely; he ended by having the fellow tossed into a fish pond, where the lampreys devoured him. He did not fail to have solemnly inscribed among the public acts of Rome all the shameful, obscene and cruel deeds that he committed, in a word, all the records of his prowess as gladiator and debauchee (*omnia quae turpiter,*

*quae impure, quae crudeliter, quae gladiatorie, quae lenonice facit).*

Finally, this execrable Emperor, after having escaped a number of conspiracies formed against his life, was assassinated, at the instigation of Marcia, his best-loved concubine. Marcia loved him also, despite his crimes, and she watched over his days like an attentive mother, perhaps out of pity rather than out of love. Commodus had conceived the idea of celebrating the first day of the year with a festival in which he was to go to the circus armed with his club and preceded by all his gladiators. Marcia besought him to do nothing of the sort, and all the officers of the imperial household also begged him not to expose himself in this manner to the daggers of assassins. The Emperor, irritated at the opposition which he encountered on the part of his most faithful servitors, resolved to disembararrass himself of them by condemning them to death. He wrote the names of the condemned ones on a piece of linden bark, which he laid under his pillow. "He was extremely fond," reports Herodian, "of one of those little children who were employed by Roman voluptuaries for their pleasure, and who were kept half clad, their beauty heightened by precious stones. He loved this one to distraction, and had named him *Philocommode*."\* The child entered the bedroom, found on the floor the list of proscribed ones and bore it away as a plaything. Marcia saw this list in the child's hands, and took it away, caressingly. As she read her name and the others, she exclaimed: "So this is the recompense I receive for my tenderness and for long patience with which I have put up with your brutalities and your debaucheries! . . . But it shall not be said that a man who is always buried in wine shall overcome a woman who is sober and has her reason!" In short, she went, on the spot, to warn those who were to share her fate, and she poured with her own hands the poison into Commodus' cup; when it seemed that the victim might survive, he was strangled by a slave named Narcissus, whom Marcia had won over to her side by promising herself to him. "Commodus was crueller than Domitian, more indecent than Nero!" acclaimed the Senate, which decreed that the corpse should be drawn with a grappling iron to the potter's field, where the bodies of dead gladiators were interred.

One might fancy that Commodus would never be surpassed in the annals of Prostitution, but that would be to forget Heliogabalus, who has left in history an ineffaceable stain and a unique and infamous

\**Translator's Note*:—"Commodus' love."



name for himself. Lampridius, in writing of the shameful (*impurissimam*) life of this monster, basing his account upon the contemporary Greeks and Latins who had written before him, was almost ashamed of his own work, although he has passed over in silence a multitude of details which modesty did not permit him to record (*quum multa improba reticuerim et quae ne dici quidem sine maximo pudore possunt*), he has cast a veil of decent language (*praetextu verborum abhibito*) over his narrative, which was addressed to the Emperor Constantine. Herodian and Xiphilinus, who alone have survived among the original historians, furnish us with a few of these odious details which Lampridius (others say Spartianus) has not seen fit to reproduce: "One is astonished," we may repeat with Lampridius, "that such a monster had been made Emperor and that he had governed for nearly three years without anyone being found to deliver Roman society, though an assassin had not been lacking for Nero, for Vitellius, for Caligula and for other Princes of this sort." The reign of Heliogabalus is, truly, the last convulsion of Paganism which, in dying, rolls about despairingly in all the mud of the ancient world.

Heliogabalus, whose name originally was Avitus, took the name which designated his former rank as priest of the sun, and later adopted that of Antoninus, because he pretended to be a descendant of that family to which the empire owed Antoninus the Pious and Marcus Aurelius, but which the execrable Commodus had already disgraced. According to Heliogabalus, his mother, Semiamira, who lived the life of a courtesan, and who had been guilty, at the court of the Emperors, of all sorts of disgraceful acts (*quum ipsa meretricio more vivens, in aulâ omnia turpia exerceret*), had had shameful relations with Antoninus Caracalla, of which union Heliogabalus was the offspring. His origin was, nevertheless, contested by those who had named him Varius, or Motley, on account of the numerous lovers who, at this period, shared his mother's favors. Whatever may have been his birth, when Macrinus had had Caracalla assassinated, Heliogabalus feared that he would be compromised in the murder of the Emperor whom he gave out to be his father, and accordingly, sought an inviolable asylum in the temple of the sun. It was from this temple that he came forth, the following year, to have himself proclaimed Emperor by his soldiers, who nicknamed him the Assyrian and Sardanapalus: "He wore very sumptuous habits," Herodian tells us, "covered with gold and purple, with bracelets, a necklace and a

crown, in the manner of a tiara, enriched with pearls and precious stones. His dress was that of the priests of Phœnicia and had in it something of Macedonian luxury; he despised the costumes of the Romans and the Greeks, which were of wool, while he cared only for silk." He conceived the idea, in order to accustom the Romans to his barbaric luxury and to his effeminate attire, of having himself painted in the costume of a priest of the sun and of having this portrait sent to Rome before coming there himself. But it was his face and bearing, the reflection of his manners, which inspired fright in the most debauched among the Romans: *Quis enim ferre posset principem per cuncta cava corporis libidinem recipientem, quum ne belluam quidem talem quisquam ferat?* Heliogabalus had not arrived through drunkenness with power at this excess of sensual depravity; he had been quite as corrupt and degraded in his sanctuary of the Phœnician god when the Empire came to him. We may assume, then, that in becoming Emperor, he had not become more perverse or more infamous, even though more cruel. What could be expected of a poor foolish wretch who possessed no notion of decency, and who believed that the principal thing in life was to be worthy and capable of satisfying the ignoble passions of as many persons as possible (*cum fructum vitæ præcipium existimans si dignus atque aptus libidini plurimorum videretur?*) We can understand why it was the Christians represented this Emperor as an incarnation of the devil.

At the first meeting of the Senate, he appeared there with his mother, whose acquaintance more than one senator present recalled having made. Semiamira took her place beside the consuls and observed the formalities prescribed for the occasion. She was the only woman who sat, as a *clarissima*,\* in the Roman Senate. Heliogabalus founded also, to please his mother, a little Senate (*senaculum*), composed of women who assembled, on certain days, upon the Quirinal to discuss legislation relating to women. They determined there what clothes they should wear in public, who should take precedence among them, and what persons should have their customary kisses, which of them should make use of suspended carriages, which of horse-chairs, which of asses, which of a chariot drawn by oxen or by mules, and which of litters, and whether these litters should be furnished with skins or adorned with gold, ivory or silver; the form and ornamentation of the

\*Translator's Note:—"Most illustrious," a title accorded to distinguished public characters.

footgear to be worn by each class of women was also regulated by a decree of this "Senate." Semiamira appears to have reserved a supreme and exclusive authority over her sex; Heliogabalus, for his part, limited his role of Emperor to the men. During the winter, which he passed at Nicomedia, before taking up his residence at Rome, Heliogabalus gave free reign to his infamous tastes, to such an extent that the soldiers who had elected him blushed for what they had done, upon beholding their Emperor mingling with vile effeminate (*omnia sordide ageret, inireturque a viris et subaret*). He took no care to change his manner of life when he was in Rome. "His occupations," says Lampridius, "were limited to choosing emissaries charged with seeking out everywhere and bringing to his court men who must fulfill certain conditions favorable to his pleasures." Xiphilinus explains what these conditions were, which nature had dispensed so liberally to a limited number of privileged ones. Those who were adjudged worthy of being presented to the Emperor took part in certain indecent pantomimes which the Emperor caused to be performed, and in which he always took the part of a fabled goddess. He loved, above all, to act out the loves of Venus, and in order to represent this character, he painted his face and rubbed his whole body with aromatic spices. Sometimes he would stage with himself as Venus, the principal scene from the judgment of Paris; his garments would suddenly fall to his feet, and he would be seen naked, one hand in front of his breast and the other over the virile organ, hiding it entirely, *posterioribus eminentibus in subactorem rejectis et oppositis*.

Heliogabalus chose, in the theatre and at the circus, companions for his debauches from among the most robust athletes and gladiators. It was there that he met those coachmen, Protogenus, Gordius and Hierocles, who took part in all his debauches; he had such a passion for Hierocles that he bestowed upon him, in public, the most hideous "kisses" (*Hieroclem vero sic amavit ut eidem oscularetur inguina*), which he called celebrating the *Floralia*. He had caused to be constructed public baths in the palace, and he had no shame in bathing himself in the midst of the people, in order that he might better discover those particular qualities which he liked in men (*ut ex eo conditiones bene vasatorum hominum colligeret*). He ran about the streets and along the banks of the Tiber seeking those whom he called *monobeli*, that is to say, complete men (*viriliores*). He had no honors to give except to fellows of this sort (*homines ad exercendas libidines bene*

*vasatos et majoris peculii*). Heliogabalus thus elevated to the first dignities of the Empire certain personages who had no other title to these preferences than their enormous virile attributes (*commendatos sibi pudilium enormitate membrorum*). At the feasts, he placed them by his side, as close as possible, and he was delighted to have contact with and to touch them (*eorumque attractione et tactu prae-cipue gaudebat*); it was from their hands he liked to receive the goblet from which he drank to their deeds and his own.

Following the example of Nero and of Commodus, he took an infinite pleasure in mingling incognito with all manner of prostitutes. "Covered with a muleteer's bonnet in order not to be recognized," Lampridius tells us, "he visited in a single day, it was said, the courtezans of the Circus, of the Theatre, of the Amphitheatre, and of all the quarters of Rome; if he did not commit debauchery with all of these women (*sine effectu libidinis*), he distributed, none the less, pieces of gold among them, saying: 'Let no one know that Antoninus has made you this gift!'" He felt a great sympathy and tenderness for these unfortunate accomplices of public debauchery. One day, he assembled in a basilica of the city all the courtezans registered on the books of the aedile, and presided himself over this strange assemblage, to which he admitted professional procuresses, all the known debauchees, and children and the young who had been sold for lustful purposes (*lenones, exoletos, undique collectos et luxuriosissimos puerulos et juvenes*). He first appeared in the costume of a high priest of the sun, by way of making an impression upon this infamous crowd, and he then delivered a lengthy harangue, beginning with the word, Comrades (*commilitones*), a word which constantly recurred in the course of his obscene speech. Then he opened a discussion on a number of abstract questions pertaining to sensual pleasure and libertinism (*disputavitque de generibus schematum et voluptatum*). His depraved audience clapped their hands and gave vent to acclamations each time he spoke of some frightful form of debauchery. Drunken with his success, he left for a moment and reappeared clad as a woman, wearing the toga and the blond wig of a courtesan, revealing his naked leg and displaying all the mincing airs, the gestures and the teasing manners of a street prostitute. In this costume, he approached those from whom he had borrowed his prostitute's livery, by way of proving to them that he knew their trade as well as they. Then, laying aside his false throat (*patillâ ejectâ*), he put on the airs and the garb of those



children who are sold into prostitution (*habitu puerorum qui prostituuntur*), and turned toward the debauchees to let them see that he was not less expert than they in their shameful art. Finally, he brought the session to a close by delivering a second harangue, more monstrous than the first, promising each of those present a gift of three pieces of gold, and asking their prayers that the gods might give him health, vigor and pleasure, according to his needs, until the day of his death.

This was not the only mark of special good will that he showed, from love of their trade, to the courtesan class. He might often be seen redeeming with his denarii those who had been slaves of the lenons, afterwards freeing them so they might continue, for their own profit, the odious traffic which they had learned. On this subject, the story is even told that, having redeemed thus, at the price of one hundred thousand sesterces (19,375 francs)\* a courtesan who was very beautiful and very famous, he did not touch her, but respected her as a virgin (*velut virginem coluisse*). When he traveled, he was followed by six hundred chariots, filled with lenons, splendidly equipped with *meretrices* and *cinaedi* (*causa vehiculorum erat lenonum, lenarum, meretricum, exoletorum, subactorum etiam bene vasatorum multitudo*). He always had women with him in the baths, and it was he himself who depilated them. He also made use, for his beard, of a depilatory paste (*psilothro*), and for this purpose preferred one which had already been used in the depilation of his women. He also employed, in shaving, the same razor with which he had shaved the hair from the shameful parts of his *gitones* (*rasit et virilia subactoribus suis novacula manu sua, qua postea barbam fecit*). "There is no one," says Xiphilinus, "who could recite or listen to a recital of the abominable indecencies which he committed or which he suffered on his body." Xiphilinus displays a repugnance about entering into those details which Dion Cassius had minutely collected, and which the Greek language covered with a sort of veil that rendered them more tolerable; but that portion of Dion Cassius' history dealing with the reign of Heliogabalus has not been preserved; it is as though the pages devoted to this abominable period had been torn out by a modest hand. Lampridius also tells us that there are, in the history of this period, a great many obscenities which he thinks should be passed over in silence, for the reason that they are not worthy of being handed down, (*digna memoratu non*

\*Translator's Note:—\$4,100.

*sunt*): "He invented," he says, "many new methods of debauchery, and he surpassed the exploits of the ancient debauchees, for he was familiar with all the practices of Nero, of Caligula and of Tiberius (*libidinum genera quaedam invenit, ut spinthrias veterum malorum vinceret, et omnes apparatus Tiberii et Caligulae et Neronis norat*)."

We may, especially, regret the loss of the original text of Dion Cassius, in perusing the following curious passage from the Abridgement of Xiphilinus, prudently toned down in the translation of M. Cousin: "Heliogabalus went to the places of prostitution, chased out the courtezans, and there plunged into the most infamous pleasures. Finally, he set aside for his incontinent purposes an apartment in his palace, at the door of which he sat, quite naked, in the manner of courtezans, drawing aside a curtain attached to gold rings and calling to passers-by in a soft feminine voice. He had other persons assigned to the same employment, whom he made use of in seeking out those who might give him pleasure. He took money from his accomplices and debauchees and gloried in a game as infamous as that. When he was with the companions of his lust, he boasted of having a greater number of lovers than they and of having amassed more silver; for he demanded money, indifferently, of all those to whom he prostituted himself. There was one among others, of very favorable build, whom he planned to have designated as Caesar." M. Cousin in this pale translation has avoided rendering the cynic naïveté of the Greek text, which did not have to consider the reactions of the French mind.

If the sensual appetites of Heliogabalus were immoderate, his depraved imagination was all the more powerful and active. Thus, what he incessantly sought, with an impatient curiosity, was new methods of defiling his eyes, his ears, and his soul by violating at the same time the modesty of others. The prodigious feasts which he gave to his effeminate and to his gladiators were graced by goblets wrought in obscene forms, while amphorae and silver vases, heavily laden with erotic images (*schematibus libidinosissimis inquinata*) circulated among the guests. All this brazen display of silver was especially in evidence at the state suppers, which he gave on the occasion of the vintages, at which it was his amusement to defile the most respectable citizens and the most venerable old men. He would inquire, to embarrass them, if they had given proof in their youth of as much vigor as he had shown, and these questions were always put with an unheard-of impudence (*impudentissime*), for he never refrained from the most

infamous expressions, and he often added to them gestures and signs which were still more infamous (*neque enim unquam verbis pepercit infamibus, quum et digitis impudicitiam ostendebat, nec ullus in conventu, et audiente populo, esset pudor*). And that was what he understood by celebrating the freedom of the vintages. He would suddenly ask an old man with a white beard and a solemn mien: "Are you adept at the cult of Venus (*an promptus esset in Venerem*)?" If the old man blushed at this impertinent question: "He blushes!" he would cry, "that proves it (*salva res est*)." Silence and a blush were equivalent with him to a confession. He would then begin to talk about his own exploits, and if all the old men present dropped their eyes and blushed, he would appeal to his young accomplices, inviting them to reply, without circumlocution, to the question he had put; the latter would obey at once, and would even seek to improve upon the disgraceful language of their master, who rejoiced to hear them, and who would interject indecent remarks to lead them on. Flattery would frequently loosen the tongues of the old men, who, in their turn, would boast of having committed the same debaucheries and of having possessed husbands (*qui improba quaedam pati se dicerent, qui maritos se habere jactarent*). The Emperor, at these unexpected revelations, would exult with joy, not perceiving that the miserable old fellows were merely feigning vices which were not theirs in order to please and divert him.

This hermaphroditic Emperor wanted to have a number of legitimate wives and a number of husbands. He espoused, first, the widow of Pomponius Bassus, whom he had caused to be condemned to death, accusing him of having censored the private conduct of the Emperor. This woman, as beautiful as she was noble, was the grand-daughter of Claudius Severus and of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Heliogabalus, who resorted to violence in order to force her to submit to an odious union, soon abandoned her for others: "He did not seek them, however, from any need that he had for them," says Xiphilinus, "but from the desire to imitate the debauches of his lovers." He afterwards married Cornelia Paula, in the hope, it was said, of the sooner becoming a father, "he who was not a man," Xiphilinus, as though to torture the commentators, adds. This marriage was celebrated by games and public festivals, but Heliogabalus repudiated his new spouse under the pretext that she had a blemish on her body. The true cause of this repudiation was another marriage which he wished to contract with

more *éclat* than the preceding one. He had penetrated into the temple of Vesta and the sacred fire had come near going out (*ignem perpetuum extinguere voluit*), while he profaned the sanctuary. He bore away the vestal, Aquila Severa, and married her insolently in the face of Heaven, saying that children born of a high priest of the sun and the priestess of Vesta would, undoubtedly, possess something of the sacred and of the divine. But Heliogabalus had no more children by this sacrilegious marriage than he did by the other, and soon became disgusted with this Vestal, whom he replaced by two or three women successively.

But in speaking of his marriages with men, we shall hardly adhere to the translation of Xiphilinus, which M. Cousin has not dared reproduce with a scrupulous fidelity. Heliogabalus was married as a woman and had himself called *Madame* and *Empress*. "He worked at the loom, sometimes wore a net and rubbed his eyes with pomade. He shaved his chin and made an occasion of it, took care that no hairs should appear upon it, so that he might be as like a woman as possible, and received in bed the senators who came to pay their respects to him. His "husband" was a slave, a native of Caria named Jerocles, a chariot driver." He had remarked Jerocles one day when, in falling from his chariot, this lackey had revealed his curly hair and beardless chin; Jerocles had abundant blond hair, a skin smooth and white, fine features and a teasing glance, but he combined with these feminine attractions the body of a giant and an athletic build. Heliogabalus had him picked up, all covered with sweat and dust; then he installed him in his bedroom, after he had given him a bath, and the following day, he espoused him solemnly. "He had himself mistreated by his husband," Xiphilinus, or rather M. Cousin, tells us, "the husband hurling insults at him and striking him with so great a violence that he sometimes bore on his face the marks of the blows which he had received. He did not love him with a weak and passing ardor, but with a strong and constant passion, so that in place of being angry at the ill treatment which he had received from him, he cherished him all the more tenderly. He would have had him declared a Caesar if his mother and his grandmother had not been opposed to this act of madness."

Jerocles, however, had a rival who encroached for a moment upon the reputation which the flunkey enjoyed with the Emperor. This was Aurelius Zoticus, called the *Cook* because his father had been reared



in the kitchen, where, as a child, he had turned the spit. Zoticus early had renounced the paternal trade in order to embrace the calling of a wrestler; with his fine carriage and physical vigor, he outbid all the athletes with whom he measured his strength in the games of the circus. Heliogabalus' purveyors recognized with admiration the singular merits of this robust champion and laid hold of him to bring him to Rome with triumphal pomp. From the laudatory reports he had received of his new plaything, Heliogabalus burned to see the lad, and had already had him named the Emperor's bedfellow (*cubicularius*). He waited with a most indecent impatience while the new bedfellow was led into the palace to the light of torches. "As soon as that infamous Prince saw him," relates Xiphilinus, preserving the language of Dion Cassius' narrative, "he ran up to him with many blushes, and when Zoticus, in saluting him, called him *Lord* and *Emperor* according to custom, he replied by turning his head with a soft feminine air and casting lascivious looks at the other: 'Do not call me *Lord*; I am a *lady*!' He took him along to the bath, and, having found that Zoticus was all he had been represented to be, the Emperor proceeded to sup in his new mistress' arms. Jerocles, jealous of this rival, had the cleverness to see to it that the cupbearers poured him a cold drink which took away all his vigor and struck him with impotence. Heliogabalus, far from suspecting the plot of which Zoticus was the victim, thereupon looked upon him with as much wrath and contempt as he had shown him esteem and affection before. He came near giving him to the beasts, and Zoticus, in his disgrace, was only too happy at finding himself merely deprived of his honors and driven out of the palace, out of Rome and out of Italy.

Heliogabalus, who played thus scandalously with the institution of marriage, from the point of view of both morality and the law, conceived the weird idea of wedding also the gods and the goddesses. He commenced by giving a wife to his Phoenician god, as though this god had need of a wife and child, as Xiphilinus remarks. The woman whom he had chosen was Pallas, and in order to accomplish this divine union, he had brought to his bedroom the Palladium, that venerated statue which the Romans looked upon as the safeguard of Rome, and which had not been removed from its place one single time, except when the temple of the goddess had caught fire. But the day after this strange and ridiculous profanation, which he had carried as far as possible by putting the two statues in the same bed, he declared

that so warlike a goddess was not suited to so pacific a god, and he caused to be brought to Rome for this god the Venus Urania, the divinity of the Carthaginians. Urania, who presided over the incubation of beings in the mysterious travail of nature, and who personified the moon and the stars of the night, had, naturally, to be the bride of Heliogabalus, who was the god of the sun and of generation. The Emperor then celebrated their wedding with splendor, and caused all the subjects of his Empire to make magnificent gifts to the bridal pair. As for himself, his face painted and rouged, he danced in a silken tunic about the two statues, laid side by side in a royal-hued bed and bound together with linen bands. This incredible marriage of statues gave rise to great rejoicings at Rome and throughout Italy. Heliogabalus became identified, in a manner, with the god whose name he bore; he made it a religious duty to submit to him and to sacrifice to him all the other gods, even that of the Christians; for he defiled the latter's temples and caused their images to be removed from the Pantheon of the sun: it was thus, on coming out of his monstrous debauches, that he fulfilled his duties of high priest. He did not refuse, however, to take part in the cult of other divinities, especially if he had a rôle to play in the mysteries of this cult. Thus, he might have been seen, with dishevelled head, among the mutilated priests of Cybele; like them, he bound up his genital parts (*genitalia sibi devinxit*), and he did all that these impure fanatics were in the habit of doing. He also took part in the weird and obscene rites of Isis, of Priapus, of Flora and of Cotytto.

Nothing could convey an exact and complete idea of these festivals, in which was combined all that lust, prodigality, gluttony and caprice could invent to satisfy the Emperor's passions, his senses and his perverse instincts. He only lived, so to speak, to discover new pleasures (*exquirere novas voluptates*.) Lampridius has enumerated a few of the follies he committed at table, where he sat always on flowers or precious essences, clad in purple or stuff of gold, laden down with precious stones, under the weight of which, he said, he sank with pleasure (*quum gravari se diceret onere voluptatis*), while on his head was a heavy oriental diadem. These fabulous repasts lasted for entire days and entire nights, with no other interruption than the intervals devoted to debauchery, as a rest for the stomach, which appeared to be as tireless as the senses. The guests were no longer men but wild beasts; they forced themselves to imitate their Emperor, without

hope of equaling him. Their host, heated with wine, would cast off all his clothing, crown himself with rays of gold, suspend a quiver over his shoulders and, naked, his hair floating down, his body rubbed with aromatic oils, would mount upon a chariot, resplendent with metal and precious stones, while three or four women, absolutely naked, would pull him about the banquet hall (*Junxit et quaternas mulieres pulcherrimas et binas ad papillam, vel ternas et amplius, et sic vectatus, est; sed plerumque nudus quum illum nudae traherent.*) His generosity toward his table-companions was expressed in the form of gigantic or ridiculous donations, which were frequently distributed by lot; he laughed loudly when into the hands of an aged debauchee there dropped a shell bearing the words, which amounted to an order: "Conduct yourself as a man before the Emperor;" he laughed much if, by one of these chances, which he loved to bring about, a decrepit old woman became the mistress of a beautiful young boy. Occasionally, hidden notes which the guests drew from an urn would command them to perform the twelve labors of Hercules or condemn them to ignoble and degrading services. This species of convivial lottery, in which he gave full reign to his imagination, sometimes brought exile, confiscation and even death to those who had not been favored by fortune. Happy the one who came out of it with only ten flies, ten eggs, ten spider webs to furnish or receive! The women, sometimes prostitutes gathered from the streets, who assisted at these orgies, and who were liable to all the vicissitudes of the occasion, were ordinarily the best provided for, and would retire exhausted, their faces discolored, their bodies bruised, their clothing in rags, but laden with booty. The most wretched and the most decayed who had been led by a good star to the Emperor's table, might boast of having been, for a moment, almost an empress, for Heliogabalus took his pleasure everywhere, providing he did not have to deal twice with the same woman (*idem mulieres nunquam iteravit, praeter uxorem*). Finally, the courtezans of Rome had the right to come and prostitute themselves in the imperial lupanar, which remained open day and night in the interior of the palace (*lupanaria domi amicis, clientibus et servis exhibuit*). Courtezans and effeminate threw themselves upon the Emperor's paternal solicitude; one day, Heliogabalus caused the seventh part of the provisions of wheat which Trajan and Severus had accumulated in the public granaries, sufficient for seven years of famine, to be distributed to them.

This monster with a human face disgraced the Empire during a reign of four years, in which he was guilty of all the extravagances, all the atrocities, all the debaucheries and all the abominations which could outrage nature. He glorified in imitating Apicius in his private life and, upon the throne, Nero, Otho and Vitellius. He was only eighteen years old when he was killed by buffoons in the latrines in which he had hidden himself. The soldiers who had conspired to deliver Rome and the world from such an Emperor rose also against his accomplices and caused them to undergo various tortures, disembowelling some and impaling others, so that, they said, their death might be like their life (*ut mors esset vite consentiens*). The *draggers* and the *impure*, as they nicknamed those who had dragged their bodies through the mud of the cities, could have had no equal in the history of the emperors, and after Heliogabalus, it seemed that humanity was taking a rest, under the beneficent influence of Alexander Severus, by opening its eyes to the light of Evangelic morality. But before Christianity, which had invaded all sections of pagan society, had placed a bridle on sensual passion and constituted itself the official police of manners, we still see the succeeding emperors, like actors in a theatre, setting the people a contagious example by all manner of prostitution. Nearly all gave themselves to debauchery, nearly all let themselves go in the monstrous refinements of depravity. Gallienus, who lived only for his belly and his pleasures, (*natus abdomini et voluptatibus*), sometimes imitated Heliogabalus; he would invite a great number of women to his feasts, and then would choose for himself the youngest and most beautiful, leaving the old and ugly to his guests. If the divine Claudius, as though to make the Romans forget the impure (*prodigiosum*) Gallienus, was a chaste and philosophic monarch; if Aurelian repressed lust with severe laws and rigorously punished adultery, even among slaves; if the Emperor Tacitus forbade the establishment of evil houses in Rome, a prohibition which could not be enforced (*meritoria intra urbem stare vetuit, quod quidem diu tenere non potuit*); if he closed the public baths at night; if he forebade filthy habits and a profuse and effeminate luxury; if Probus was truly worthy of his name; Carinus, the predecessor of Diocletian, was, on the other hand, according to Flavius Vopiscus "the most debauched of men, the most brazen of adulterers and corrupters of youth, who carried his infamy so far as even to prostitute himself (*homo omnium contaminatissimus, adulter, frequens corruptor juventutis, ipse quoque*



*male usus genio sexus sui*).” He had as praetorian prefect an old procurer named Matronianus; for secretary, an *impurus*, with whom he always took his midday meal; while his friends were the most perverse of creatures. He defiled himself with the most infectious vices (*enormibus se vitiis et ingenti foeditate maculavit*), and respected nothing (*moribus absolutus*). But Diocletian swept away all the vices which had made of the Emperor’s palace a lupanar; and Diocletian, who was a Christian in the chastity of his manners and the morality of his laws, even though he cruelly persecuted the Christians, Diocletian the sage, the austere, the philosopher, still had the odious courage to make Prostitution one of the punishments which were inflicted upon virgins and Christian maidens. It is, however, under Diocletian that the history of Roman Prostitution appears to come to an end.



HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION

PART TWO

THE CHRISTIAN ERA





## CHAPTER XXX

ALL the cults of paganism were, so to speak, but the symbols and the mysteries of Prostitution; Christianity, in proposing to do away with these and to replace them by a single cult, founded upon human and divine morality, was under the necessity, first of all, of attacking Prostitution and reforming manners, before attempting any change in religious dogma. It is certain that the first apostles began their mission in a corrupt world by preaching continence and chastity as the fundamental principles of the new doctrine. Jesus Christ, the truth is, had lived upon the earth chastely and like a virgin, although he had absolved the woman sinner and had converted the Magdalen, although he had saved, through their repentance, the unfortunate victims of the demon of the flesh. It was, then, something unknown in pagan society, this teaching and practice of what might be called the sensual virtues, along with this celestial pardon, which always reserved the privilege of effacing the most inveterate of stains. There was a strange contrast between the civil and moral laws of antiquity and this austere restraint imposed upon the carnal appetites, along with an indulgent pity for the errors of an earthly fragility. In the presence of Roman jurisprudence, which condemned the adulteress to death; despite the law of Moses, which was not less rigorous, and which was even more scrupulously observed among the Jews; in spite of all this, Jesus Christ dared to say to the Scribes and Pharisees, who had brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, and who wished to stone her in His presence: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her!" Then, having inquired of the guilty one writhing at His feet where her accusers and her judges were, He said to her, in a voice gentle and consoling: "Neither do I condemn thee! Go and sin no more (*vade et jam amplius noli peccare*)."

And yet, it was Jesus who instituted Christian marriage, a marriage quite different from the conjugal union authorized by Greek and Roman manners. The holiness of this indissoluble marriage, contracted in the presence of God, shines forth in those words which represent a whole legislative system, a whole morality and a whole philosophy: "A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cling unto her, and the twain shall be one

flesh. Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

The work of Christ had to be the moral regeneration of the world and the teaching to humanity of that respect which it owes itself; the religion which came from the Gospel was like a dike destined to restrain the irruptions of ancient debauchery, when those irruptions were threatening to engulf all the primitive notions of decency and virtue. It required not less than three centuries of struggle, of preaching and, above all, of example in order to overthrow the impure temples of Isis, of Ceres, of Venus, of Flora and of the other divinities of Prostitution. Christianity, in declaring war not only on the abuse of physical pleasures, but also upon the pleasures themselves, was at great pains to destroy that Paganism which protected, when it did not encourage, these pleasures. We may understand, then, something of the tremendous efforts of the apostles and their holy successors in arriving at this prodigious result: namely, the establishment of the moral law and the religious repression of sensuality. Moses, in Deuteronomy, had laid down the principle: "There shall be no prostitute in Israel;" but this commandment had never been put into practice among the Israelites, who saw no wrong in having prostitutes themselves and, often, in furnishing them to foreign nations. Legal Prostitution, was, perhaps, more active and more widespread in Judea than throughout the rest of the Roman Empire. St. Paul, inspired by Christ, had to do what Moses had not done, when he rose up to drive out of the nascent Church the evil spirit of Prostitution. "Let us walk honestly, as in the day," he says, in his *Epistle to the Romans*, "not in rioting and drunkenness, nor in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof (*et carnis curam feceritis in desideriis*)." During the whole course of his apostleship, St. Paul pursued with unrelenting severity the sins of the flesh, in which he believed that he was combatting the very essence of Paganism.

St. Paul knew well enough how far pagans were capable of going in the matter of incontinence; he had lived long enough for that. And so, from the time of his first *Epistle to the Romans*, he addresses to the latter energetic reproaches for their abominable vices, which he terms ignominious (*passiones ignominiae*); he pictures the Romans as wholly defiled with the most hideous lust (*masculi in masculos turpitudinem operantes*). It is to idolatry that he attributes this

frightful demoralization which accompanied the worship of the false gods. "They have changed the glory of the uncorruptible God," he cries, with a chaste horror, "into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves (*propter quod tradidit illos Deus in desideria cordis eorum, in immunditiam, ut contumeliis afficiant corpora sua in semetipsis*)."

The Romans were quite surprised that the apostle of the *King of the Jews* should take it upon himself to forbid what the most austere philosophers had authorized, by their examples well as by their writings, with the exception of Seneca, who was looked upon as a Christian in disguise. But St. Paul had not come to Rome to traffic with his enemy, the sin of the flesh, which God, he said, had condemned, in that God had sent upon the earth His own Son in the form of sinful flesh (*in similitudinem carnis peccati*) in order to take away the sin: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (*qui autem in carne sunt, Deo placere non possunt*)."

Those who listened to these preachings of St. Paul were not rich voluptuaries, living in luxury and laying tribute upon an entire world to satisfy their pleasures; they were poor plebeians, who knew nothing of those monstrous refinements of Asiatic debauchery, brought into Rome with the trophies of vanquished peoples; they were Tiber boatmen, street-corner beggars, grave-diggers of the Appian Way, fish sellers, herb-merchants, fugitive slaves and unfortunate freedmen. But amid these dregs of the suburban population of the Eternal City, there was a younger generation, composed of girls and boys who were being reared for the purpose of mercenary Prostitution. The Apostle addressed himself, particularly, to these sad victims of the corruption of their parents, their masters or their comrades; he did not endeavor to make them blush for their ignoble way of life, but he counselled them to renounce it in order to devote themselves to the service of the true God, who wanted only souls and not bodies! "Ye have yielded your members to iniquity unto iniquity, (*exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditie et iniquitati, ad iniquitatem*); even so now yield your members, servants to righteousness unto holiness." On a number of occasions, St. Paul's proselytes, astonished at the

severity of his precepts regarding carnal relations, inquired of him how they were to silence their desires and quench their more or less imperious appetites; the virtuous Saint thereupon counselled prayer, fasting, meditation and penitence, as the most efficacious remedies to be employed against the seductions of the flesh; then, when it was found that these remedies were not enough for certain rebellious natures, he left to marriage the delicate task of adjustment. "It is better to marry than to burn," he says to the Corinthians (*quod si non se continent, nubant. Melius est enim nubere quam uri*)."

Christian marriage being the final bulwark which St. Paul opposed to the temptations of the flesh, he went on, then, to establish the true character of this marriage, which was the strongest dike that Christianity had reared against Prostitution. And yet, he did not appear a very warm partisan of marriage, when he remarked, enigmatically, to the Corinthians that he who married his daughter did well, but he who did not marry her did still better. It is true that, a little while after, he came back to this delicate question, *à propos* of women who prayed without having their heads covered: "The woman is the glory of the man!" he cried yielding to sentiments which were all too human, "woman is the glory of man, for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." St. Paul was not less inflexible with regard to every concession which might be made to the flesh: "For this is the will of God," he says to the Thessalonians, "Even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, and that everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor (*ut sciat unus quisque vestrum vas suum possidere in santificatione et honore*), not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God, for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." He goes on, then, to enumerate the various degrees of impurity through which the body may pass in defiling itself: "The works of the flesh are fornication," etc. Each of these sins has been defined by the Fathers of the Church and the theologians: fornication, *fornicatio*, is the relation of a free man with a free woman, that is, the carnal act accomplished out of marriage; impurity, *immunditia*, is the habit of unclean pleasure, the search for obscene joys; impudicity, *impudicitia*, is sodomy, or an act against nature; finally, lust, *luxuria*, is lechery, the unbridling of sensual passions.



At Ephesus, as at Corinth, at Colossus as at Thessalonica, St. Paul attacks, pursues and overthrows paganism under the form of sensuality or lust; it is Prostitution which he combats unceasingly, because he finds it everywhere, even in the mysteries connected with the worship of the false gods. St. Paul had been a pagan; he knew, then, of his own accord, and was able to appreciate, the true character of that material religion which he desired to replace by a religion of the spirit; and that is why, in all his preachings, he appears as the reformer of manners in the name of Jesus Christ, who, according to the words of a Father of the Church, had lived chastely, although born of a woman, and who had never defiled the white robe of his virginity. That is why St. Paul says, specifically, to the Thessalonians: "That ye should abstain from fornication (*ut abstineatis vos a fornicatione*)."

He says the same to the Colossians: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth; fornication, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence." He says to the Galatians: "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." If he wrote to the Ephesians, it was to adjure them not to live as the other nations, who, having lost all remorse and all sense of modesty, had abandoned themselves to dissoluteness, plunging with an insatiable avidity into all sorts of impurities. He dared to preach chastity and continence amid the corruption of voluptuous Corinth and in the presence of those of an evil way of life, of thieves and debauchees, who had come to hear him out of curiosity: "Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (*an nescitis quoniam qui adhaeret meretrici unum corpus efficitur? Erunt enim, inquit, duo in carne una! . . . Fugite fornicationem. Omne peccatum quodcumque fecerit homo, extra corpus est; qui autem fornicatur, in corpus suum peccat*)."

All the apostles were in accord with St. Paul in condemning Paganism on the score of Prostitution; in this they were merely conforming to the sentiment of the Prophets and the letter of the Bible; but the Evangelists had been less energetic in their pro-

\*Translator's Note:—Lacroix, it is to be noted, follows the Vulgate and not the original Greek.

nouncements against the sins of the flesh. St. John even had placed in two separate categories spiritual and bodily acts, in such a manner that they were not to be confused under a single judgment: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit, spirit." That was, perhaps, a charitable excuse, offered to carnal sinners who desired purification through the waters of baptism. However this may have been, St. Paul's doctrine, more austere and less equivocal, was generally adopted by the first Fathers of the Church and by the councils: "Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh," St. Jude had said. From this horror of incontinence came, inevitably, Christian celibacy.

Philosophy, it is true, had sometimes taught temperance\* to the pagans, but this philosophic temperance found its *raison d'être* only in purely human consideration; it was but relative and accidental, for it was Cicero's thesis that nature must be obeyed, and that her laws were as lofty as those of a god. Aristotle, for his part, proposed no other rule in the matter of sensual pleasures than the knowledge of one's own strength, that is to say, the instincts of nature. And so it was, the philosophers did not recommend temperance, except from the point of view of health and physical economy; they often abandoned themselves to their desires, for the reason that they regarded the pleasures of the senses as wholly conformable to nature (*hos physeos ergon*), according to the evidence of St. Nilus, a disciple of St. John Chrysostom. Modesty was only a virtue in the hymns of poets; and this virtue, even with the ancients, did not possess the attributes which one might expect of its name. The goddess, Modesty, who had temples and altars throughout the Roman Empire, did not, according to the most learned antiquaries, stand for virginity or even continence; she represented, rather, conscience, the intimate voice of the soul, the shame which comes from doing evil and the love of good. This Modesty of the Romans had for image a seated woman, sometimes veiled, holding her right hand to her face and pointing to the latter with her raised index finger, in order to express the fact that the sign of modesty lay in a lowered glance and a blushing brow. Seneca is, perhaps, the only pagan philosopher who understood and taught moral chastity, which the Christians imposed with

\*Translator's Note:—*Sophrosyne* (the Latin *temperantia*). The other three cardinal virtues of the stoics were: *sophia* (*sapientia*), wisdom; *dikaïosyne* (*justitia*), justice; and *andreia* (*fortitudo*), courage.

a pious abnegation of natural instincts: "Among them," reports Origen, "the simplest and least enlightened persons, and even those of lowest condition display often, in their manners and in their conduct, a gravity, a purity, a chastity and an innocence which are wholly admirable, while the great philosophers, who are looked upon as sages, are so far from these same virtues as to defile themselves openly with the most infamous and the most abominable crimes."

Religious chastity, nevertheless, was not absolutely disdained by the pagans. We have already said that the men and the women abstained from all sexual relations when they went to offer a sacrifice to the gods. Lovers themselves then withdrew from their mistresses, while the latter avoided a carnal contact which would have forced them to seek purification before the ceremony.\* The venereal act was not looked upon as reprehensible in any case, and it was never an offense to Divinity, which, on the contrary, encouraged it in a general sense; but in presenting an offering which should be agreeable to the god who was the object of it, the only thing to do was to deprive oneself of the pleasure which was esteemed above all others. There was in this a sacrifice of the most delicate sort, since the one who made it was at the same time the victim. This continence as an act of pure devotion was, then, frequently to be met with in the private life of the Romans, who practiced their religion with certain scruples; upon the eve of certain festivals, at the approach of certain mysteries, the conjugal couch no longer held the husband and wife, who felt impelled to keep a distance between them and to impose an absolute restraint upon the pleasures of marriage. Ovid, in his *Fasti* (Book II,) shows us Hercules, Hercules himself, conforming to this usage, when he prepares with Omphale to sacrifice to Bacchus: They slept in two separate, although neighboring beds (*et positis justa succubuere toris*), and they did nothing which might interfere with the decency of the sacrifice. The priests who sacrificed daily undoubtedly were not required to be chaste all the time; and yet, we may infer, from a number of passages in Latin authors, that a sacrifice was not looked upon as good and propitious except when the one who offered it had pure hands. "Chastity is pleasing to the gods," says the poet Tibullus (*casta placent superis*), who suggests that neophytes do not approach the altar except with immaculate garments (*pura cum veste*) and that

\**Translator's Note*:—Cf. the Catholic confession and communion.

they do not sprinkle the sacred water except with chaste hands. "Far from the altars," cries Tibullus, "he who has given a part of his night to Venus! (*Discedite ab aris, quis tulit hesternæ gaudia nocte Venus*)."\* As to the vow of virginity, the pagan religion authorized or prescribed it under different circumstances; but this species of physical virginity held no analogy with that moral virginity which the Christians understood and practiced. Vestals, for example, had to preserve intact their virginity, under pain of being interred alive and given over to the most horrible torture; but the necessity of remaining virgins ceased for them at the end of puberty, and they might then feed the fires of Venus as they before had fed the flames of Vesta. The youngest, moreover, were by no means constrained to spiritual chastity or an innocence of the heart: they assisted at the public games, at the gladiatorial combats, at the mimes, at the *atellana* and at the dances in the theater; and they did not close their eyes to voluptuous images nor their ears to obscene words and immodest songs. Their virginity did not extend above the belt,\*\* as one Father of the Church puts it.

"Is there a comparison," remarks St. Ambrose (*De Virginitate*, Book I), "between our Christian virgins and the virgins of Vesta and the priestesses of Pallas? But what sort of virginity is that which is made to consist not in purity and holiness of manners but in years, and which is not perpetual, but merely prescribed up to a certain age? This pretended integrity is soon changed into libertinism, when one is resolved to lose it at a more advanced age (*petulantior est talis integritas, cujus corruptela seniori servatur ætati*). Those who prescribe a certain period for virginity thereby teach their virgins not to persevere in such a state. What a religion, which prescribes modesty for the young and immodesty for the aged! . . . No, these Vestals are not chaste, since they are so only by constraint, nor decent, since one may buy them, or rather, hire them for silver; for the word modesty may not be applied to one who every day submits to the immodest glances of an entire populace, corrupted with debauchery (*nec pudor ille est qui intemperantium oculorum quotidiano expositus convictio, flagitiosis aspectibus verberatur*)!" The Fathers of

\*This is the Virgilian "*Procul o procul, absint profani*." Cf. the Horatian "*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*."

\*\*Translator's Note:—"ne dépassait donc pas la ceinture" is Lacroix' phrase. The original is not quoted.



the Church were tireless in comparing Christian virgins with the Vestals, or pagan virgins, in order better to bring out the profound difference which existed between the two. St. Ambrose comes back to this incessantly in his chapter on Vestals, in order to detract from the merit of the latter's interested and imperfect virginity; he does not go as far as Minucius Felix, who looks upon this virginity as highly suspect, and who dares say that all the Vestals would have been buried alive, if they had been rigorously punished for their offenses (*impunitatem fecerit non castitas tutior, sed impudicitia felicior*): "Let them, then, cease praising those Vestals," cries St. Ambrose, "for chastity that is sold for a price in silver, and which is not due to a love of virtue, is not chastity; that is not virginity which, as on an auction block, is bought or hired for a time!" As to that purely physical virginity which the pagans demanded of their Vestals, it appeared so difficult to preserve and so dangerous to promise that it was not easy to find a girl who would willingly consent to vow herself to the sorry state of a Vestal. "You have barely seven Vestals," cried St. Ambrose to the Emperor Valentinian, "and moreover they were very young when they were devoted to Vesta. Behold, that is all the virgins which idolatry may claim for its service! Seven unhappy ones who have permitted themselves to be seduced by costumes embroidered in purple, by sumptuous litters, by a numerous retinue of slaves, by special privileges, enormous revenues and, above all, by the hope of not dying virgins despite their vows!"

Christian celibacy had become, especially with women, one of the most powerful means of propagating the Evangelical religion; the doctrine formulated by St. Paul regarding continence had been accepted with fanaticism by the young feminine converts, who found a glory in overcoming the desires of the flesh; for the ardors of the senses were appeased, if not extinguished, by abstinence, sobriety, prayer and solitude. Since celibacy, which the Roman law proscribed as a shameful thing, was looked upon by the new followers of Jesus Christ as, at once, an honor and a victory, a sort of emulation was to be witnessed among the virgins, who vowed themselves to a mystic marriage with the Son of God. Of a sudden, ancient Prostitution halted and recoiled before the triumph of virginity. "Let the Gentiles," said St. Ambrose, "lift the eyes of the body and, at the same time, those of the soul; for they may behold that illustrious multitude, that venerable assemblage, that entire race of virgins who

honor the Church (*plebem pudorius poplum integritatis, concilium virginitatis*): They do not wear any fillets upon the head, but a modest veil such as only is commended by a chaste custom; they do not permit themselves those artifices of the toilet which serve the shameful traffic of beauty (*lenocinia pulchritudinis*!)” Prudentius, in his book against Symmachus, also exalted Christian virginity: “The finest privilege of our virgins,” he said, “lies in modesty, in the face covered with a sacred veil, in a respectable and decent life, sheltered from profane glances, in a frugal repast and in a spirit that is always sober and chaste!” It must be confessed, however, that what produced this contest, this emulation in the matter of virginity, was not so much a contentment with the virginal state as the pleasure of possessing a superiority over other women and causing oneself to be remarked for a virtue accompanied by a sort of pomp. Thus, the virgins occupied a special place in the ceremonies of religion. They wore also a distinctive garb, which marked them out in public. A strange coincidence! this attribute was the mitre\* which the courtezans of Rome, especially the Syrian ones, had taken for their emblem, and which was a dishonor to the woman brazen or imprudent enough to adopt such a headgear. The mitre of virgins, of which St. Optatus speaks (*Contra Donat.*, Book VI) differed, undoubtedly, in height, in form and in color from the mitre of courtezans; it did not permit of long and flowing locks, nor a blond peruke, nor a coiffure curled and gleaming with gold-dust; for a Christian virgin proclaimed her vocation by cutting off her hair. This respectable variety of mitre was hidden in a veil, violet, brown or black in color, which covered the face and fell down over the shoulders, like the *flammeum* of Vestals.

During the three first centuries necessary to the establishment of Catholic dogma, there was an impressive warfare in progress, between morality and Prostitution, as the doctors of the Church incessantly set over against the sensual philosophy of the pagans the chaste and austere experience of the Christian life. The holy Fathers desired to make themselves masters of their bodies, in order better to obtain control of their souls. The women were at first enthusiastic for virginity; and following their example, the men sub-

\**Translator's Note*.—The tradition of the mitre as a courtesan's mark was still very much alive in the sixteenth century. See Aretino's play, *La Cortigiana*: “That Rome of yours is a brazen hussy (*spacciata*); she wears the mitre and is not ashamed.”

mitted to continence. "What more beautiful thing could be imagined than the sublime virtue of chastity?" said St. Bernard, taking his inspiration, in the eleventh century, from the high thoughts of the primitive Church, "it makes clean a body rescued from a corrupt and filthy mass; of an enemy it makes a friend, and of a man an angel!" In opposition to the religious debauches of Paganism the new cult surrounded itself with simple and modest ceremonies. These mysteries were celebrated in holy contemplation, without tumult, without clamor, without scandal. Modesty and decency presided always at the Christian rites. The two sexes were separated in the churches, they did not see each other when they were in the Holy Presence; they did not meet each other even in going to pray before the altar, and they avoided thus the perils of a familiar relationship which might have made room for the weaknesses of the flesh. The priests in their exhortations found no texts they liked better than those words of St. Paul in his *Epistle* to the Romans with reference to the yielding of one's members to sin and iniquity. This praise, this glorification of chastity served as a point of departure for all their teachings. "Continence," said St. Basil, "is the ruin of sin, the despoiling of the vicious affections, the mortification of the passions and even of the natural desires of our bodies, the augmentation of merit, the work of God, the school of virtue and the possession of all blessings." (*Interrog.*, XVII ff.)

While the Christians were priding themselves upon their moral superiority and the purity of their manners, the pagans were employing against them the weapons of calumny and pretending that their religion was but a monstrous form of Prostitution. The Christians, as a matter of fact, constantly threatened or persecuted, only met in secret, far from the sight of their enemies, in the depths of woods, in caverns, and, above all, in the shadows of the catacombs. No profane eye was permitted in these hidden sanctuaries, and nothing was known of their rites, of their practices or of their dogmas except what came to light in the untruthful accounts of a few rare apostates. Thus, the opinion of the people, encouraged by the fanatic priests of the false gods, was for a long time hostile to these pious catechumens, who practiced the most austere virtues, and who preferred death to the least bodily stain. The report had been widely circulated that these brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ professed a religion so frightful that they did not dare confess its principles

and its rites. There was a tale which had to do with unknown horrors committed in their nocturnal assemblages, and rumor went so far as to assert that their terrible lusts respected neither age, sex, nor the ties of blood and family. Christianity, according to some, was but a Judaism in disguise; according to others, it was an execrable and frenzied mixture of atheism and debauchery, a cult such as had endeavored a number of times to find its way into the religion of the Roman Empire, and which consisted in the most odious and perverse rites humanly conceivable. It was in this manner that ancient Prostitution sought to absolve itself by attributing to Christianity its own excesses; for two centuries, Christianity threatened pagan society before attaining the light of day and unveiling itself in all its gleaming purity.

The philosophic Platonists were the first to make the acquaintance of and to justify the Evangelic doctrines; from the year 170 of the new era, Athenagoras had victoriously refuted the unworthy calumnies which attributed to the Christians all sorts of incests and infamies; in his *Apology* for the Christian religion, addressed to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus he proclaimed the chastity of the Christians with respect to sex, age and degree of consanguinity: "We regard the ones as children," he says, "the others as our brothers and our sisters, and we honor the old ones as our fathers and our mothers. Thus, we take great care to preserve the purity of those whom we look upon as our relatives. When we come to give the kiss of peace, it is with great caution, as befitting an act of religion; for if it were defiled by an impure thought, it would deprive us of eternal life. Each of us, in taking a wife, thinks only of having children, and imitates the laborer, who, having once consigned his grain to the earth, patiently waits for the harvest." In another passage of his *Apology*, Athenagoras returns with still more force to this subject of chastity, a chastity which was characteristic of all the Christians amid the ordinary, perduring incontinence of the Gentiles: "The Christians," he says, "abstain not merely from adulteries, but also from relations with public women; and the fear which they have of falling into the abyss restrains them from the thought of the least pleasure that is not respectable, and causes them carefully to avoid all lascivious glances such as may be the carriers of some impurity. They put the ban on frequent visiting, divertissements, disrespectable discourse, long conversations, futile



contacts, and immoderate laughter. They deny themselves the most innocent liberties, and they never show those parts of the body which decency keeps covered. Their garments hide them out of doors and their modesty within doors, in such a manner that in the house they preserve a sense of shame in the presence of their relatives and servants; in the bath, they are ashamed for the sake of women and, in particular, for their own sakes." All the Fathers of the nascent Church protest with the same energy against the perfidious and calumniating imputations which tended to bring the Christians into disrepute: "The love of chastity has so much force with them," said St. Justin in his *Dialogues*, "that many of them are to be found who spend their entire lives without any carnal alliance and who remain virgins at the age of sixty years, and this continence is not due to temperament or country."

St. Cyprian, St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil, all the Greek and Latin Fathers, have given us an edifying picture of Christian manners, which were as pure as those of the pagans were depraved. St. Cyprian devotes his *Treatise on Modesty* to the exaltation of this virtue of the Christians: "They know," he says, "that carnal pleasures begin with the hope of permanent joy and end in pure illusions, which cause us to blush for ourselves. They hurl us with fury into every species of brutality; they lead us to all sorts of crime, by seducing us into the horror and abomination of those monstrous alliances which pass over from the sex to which nature has consigned us to our own sex and descend to that of animals, by inventing a thousand voluptuous abominations over which the imagination cannot pause without blushing." St. Gregory of Nyssa calls to witness the pagans themselves, in order to establish the glorious chastity of the Christians: "They are not content with being chaste in their bodies, to the mortification of all carnal pleasures; they purify themselves also in spirit, seeking that true virginity which must be their defense against a sinful adultery." It was through fear of defiling their souls that they avoided every shameful spectacle, every indecent image; they never attended theatrical performances, which St. Cyprian describes as *schools of impurity*; they banished from their frugal tables those diabolic viands which excited the senses and led to the quest of gross satisfactions; they did not permit themselves the use of perfumes, which nourished soft and lascivious thoughts and led to sensuality; they permitted neither songs, nor dances, nor

laughter, nor drunkenness, nor gluttony at their banquets, where the presence of the Holy Spirit was always in evidence.

St. Clement of Alexandria (*Pedag.*, Book II) enters into the most intimate details on the subject of this chastity, which was the pride of the faithful and the shame of the Gentiles. After having established, in his *Stromates* (Book II), the radical difference which existed between marriages of one sort and the other, by saying that the pagans sought only the satisfaction of their animal passions in the marriage bed, whereas the Christians demanded only that this union should lead them to a union with Jesus Christ, goes on to say: "The Christians would have women please their husbands by the purity of their manners and not by their beauty; they would also have husbands not make use of their wives as prostitutes, from whom are to be sought only sensual corruptions."—"For," he adds in his *Pedagogus*, "nature has not given us marriage except as something which is to be used and not abused, in a proportion useful to the health of the body." This same Father of the Church presents us with a curious picture of the decency of the Christian marriage: "The married pair," he says, "take modesty to their couch, from fear that, if they were to violate in darkness the precepts of that modesty which they have learned by the light of day, they would resemble Penelope, who undid at night the warp she had woven during the day. This modesty being a proof that they know how to repress their desires, even when those desires have a right to freedom, it is at the same time a proof that, in giving themselves one to another, they are wholly chaste. One does not see in their couch all those accompaniments of sin which pleasure alone has invented; for if Jesus Christ has permitted them to marry, he has not permitted them to be voluptuaries." Elsewhere St. Clement defines the chastity of Christian marriage, compared with which the marriage of pagans was but a Prostitution in the form of concubinage, or an immoral traffic: "The only object of a union," he says (*Pedag.*, Book II, Chapter 10), "is to have children in order to make of them good citizens. It is against reason and against law to seek in marriage nothing but pleasure; but one should not, therefore, abstain from it from fear of having children. Nature equally forbids, in infancy and in old age, an immodest relation between the two sexes; those to whom marriage permits these carnal relations must be continually attentive to the presence of God, and must respect their bodies,

which are his members, by abstaining from all glances, all contacts which are illicit and unclean. . . .”

The conduct observed by married couples naturally led certain doctors of the Church, such as Origen, to suppress the feminine sex in the other life as futile and dangerous. Origen, who had tried out his doctrine upon his own person, would have it that the masculine sex alone was to be resurrected. Other Fathers, in order better to assure the continence of their flocks, were of the opinion that the elect possessed no sex, but that the damned preserved theirs along with their miserable passions. The majority of the doctors, on the contrary, based their belief upon the words of the *Apocalypse*, and so believed and taught that in Heaven the Saints would be married, would produce children and would enjoy all the pleasures of the body. Tertullian, Lactantius, Irenaeus, Justin and Methodius pronounced in favor of this celestial and eternal marriage. But the Church, through the voice of its councils, was forced to revise this hazardous opinion, and to declare that, if the two sexes persisted in Heaven, there would be no marriage, much less anything in the way of terrestrial pleasures and procreation of children. Let us hear St. Augustine upon this, in his *City of God*, Book II, Chapter 17: “God shall take away whatever is vicious among the elect, but he will permit sex to remain, which is not an evil since God is its creator. Those members which shall no longer possess any passions, and which shall no longer serve their former purposes, shall go clad in a new beauty.” The casuists did not permit themselves to stop here, but imagined that the resurrection would repair a lack of virginal integrity in bodies which had lost their virginity upon the earth.

Chastity, that virtue of which the Christians claimed the monopoly, was, then, the constant preoccupation of the latter and the principal mark of their belief; they guarded it as a precious gift from the divine Saviour, and they made of it an offensive armor against pagan sensualism, which found itself incapable of imitating Christianity in this regard. The founders of Catholicism, aware of the active power which chastity exerted over the masses as over individuals, had summoned to its aid all the rigors of ecclesiastical law, so greatly interested was the young Church in preaching manners and in teaching by example. Hence the severity of the Christian code respecting carnal infractions which the human law did not touch. For simple fornication, St. Gregory of Nyssa desired that the

penance should be nine years, divided into three periods, the fornicators to be for three years *excluded* from prayer, to be for three years merely *auditors*, and for three years *prostrate ones*. St. Basil was more indulgent; he was content with a penance of four years for fornication, and with knowing that one year had been passed in each state of repentance. On the other hand, he did not spare adultery, incest, sodomy or bestiality, which he punished with a penance of fifteen years, the guilty one remaining for four years a *weeper*, for five years an *auditor*, for five years a *prostrate one*, and for two years an *assistant*. On the other hand, the adultery of a married man with an unmarried woman was equivalent to a single fornication. Polygamy, although looked upon as a state of bestiality and one unworthy of man, carried with it a penance of but four years, one year as a *weeper* and three years as a *prostrate one*. The concubinage of persons devoted to God was not looked upon as other than a case of fornication, provided these illicit relations were broken. A girl who had prostituted herself with the consent of her relatives or her masters did three years of penance; she who had only yielded to violence incurred no penalty, and was not defiled in the sight of God or man. As for a deacon guilty of fornication, he must go back to the ranks of the laity and labor in mortifying his sinful flesh.

This legislation of the primitive Church is sufficient proof of the inestimable value which the Christians placed upon the preservation of their physical and mental purity; the pagans, however, were maliciously stubborn in the face of a virtue which their adversaries incessantly upheld as a defiance to the disorders and impurities of the pagan religion. They set themselves to finding out how far this virtue might be carried, and endeavored to dim its lustre through violence, outrages and enforced debauchery. But this sort of punishment was no more effective than others over the holy resignation of virgins and martyrs, who underwent, without ceasing to be pure and radiant, the impure yoke thus forced upon them. These victims made to God an offering of their virginity. The Church assisted them in this agony of persecution, and her consoling voice encouraged them to mount to Heaven by the bitter path of Prostitution: "Virginity," St. Augustine cried to them (*Contra Jul.*, Book IV), "is of the body; modesty is of the spirit; the latter remains when virginity has been taken away from the body." . . . "It is not violence that corrupts the bodies of holy women," added St. Jerome. . . . "A virgin," said St.



Ambrose, "may be raped and still not defiled." . . . "Moreover, whatever may be done with the body and in the body through violence," replied St. Augustine, "does not defile the person who has suffered this violence without being able to resist it; for if purity perished in this manner, it would be no longer a virtue of the spirit, but a quality of the body, like beauty, health and other perishable blessings."

A priest named Victorian had written to St. Augustine in order to announce dolorously the horrible violences which the barbarians were causing Christian virgins to endure; the Saint replied to him (*Ep.* 122) that if these virgins endured such violences without consenting and without submitting to them, they were not guilty in the sight of God. "This shall rather be to them," he said, "an honorable and a glorious wound than a shameful corruption. For chastity, which is of the soul, possesses so great a spiritual force that it remains inviolable, and as a result, the purity of the body itself is unable to receive any soil, even through the corruptors have dared to vanquish and violate the members of the physical body." St. Basil expresses, almost in the same terms, an analogous doctrine in order to ease the minds of virgins threatened with this most redoubtable of martyrdoms: "If there are any," he says, "who have endured violence, their souls have not consented to it, and they shall not fail to present to their divine Bridegroom those souls wholly pure and free from corruption and with even more honor and glory." This was at once an encouragement and a reparation for the poor virgins given to the punishment of prostitution. The idea of this cruel punishment certainly had been inspired in the persecutors by the singular admiration which the Christians manifested for their virgins, and at the same time, by the striking pride which these latter evidenced in their state of immaculate purity. That is why, during the persecutions, so many Christian virgins were outraged by their executioners, who were but applying ancient Roman law, by virtue of which a virgin could not be put to death. "As to virgins," says Suetonius, in his *Life of Tiberius*, "since an ancient custom prevented them from being strangled, the hangmen first violated and then strangled them (*immaturatae puellae, quia more tradito nefas esset virgines strangulari, vitiatae prius a carnifice, dein strangulatae*)." The rape of Christian virgins was, then, in the beginning, but a preliminary to capital punishment, conforming to the custom of the Roman law; later, this rape became the principal part of the punishment itself, and the

virgins did not decline the responsibilities of their virginal state in the presence of their pagan judges, who took an odious pleasure in wounding them in what they held most dear; but their virginity was a sacrifice which they offered to God in exchange for the crown of martyrdom.

We must listen to the chant of victory which St. Cyprian addresses to these divine martyrs devoured by the monster of pagan Prostitution: "Virgins," he says, "are like flowers in the garden of the Church, the master work of grace, and the ornament of nature, a labor perfect and incorruptible, worthy of all praise and all honor, the image of God, corresponding to the sanctity of our Lord, and the most illustrious portion of the flock of Jesus Christ." Paganism hoped to destroy the germ of the new religion by attacking the very principle of virginity, but the virgins were stronger than their executioners.

## CHAPTER XXXI

IT IS not difficult to understand the motives and the lofty foresight which commended chastity above all the other Christian virtues. This virtue, undoubtedly, had been prescribed by the law of Moses, and we find at every step in the Holy Scriptures a condemnation of excesses of the flesh. Solomon, who must have had seven hundred concubines in his old age, did not spare those guilty excesses into which he allowed himself to be drawn: "Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away," he says in Proverbs (Chapter VI). St. Paul and the apostles were, then, but following the Mosaic doctrine by imposing upon the Christians carnal abstinence and a virginal purity. But there was, also, a necessity which lent its aid to the counsels of religion, in the interest of that morality which the Gospel had dictated: the communal life of catechumens of the two sexes exposed them to temptations, to ardors and to daily perils which called for a powerful preservative to save them from disorders which were almost inevitable. These disorders, reminiscent of the most shameful mysteries of paganism, would have confounded with the latter in the eyes of the pagans the divine religion of Jesus Christ, and the religion of the true God would have possessed no advantage in the struggle with the debasing cults of Venus, of Bacchus, of Cybele and of Isis; for in these different idolatries, the celebration of mysteries defiled the temples and sacred groves only at certain periods of the year, whereas the occult ceremonies of the Catholic faith took place all the time, every day, or rather every night, under the name of *agapai*.\*

At these *agapai*, at these fraternal repasts in which the Word of the Lord nourished the soul by mortifying the body, the two sexes were together, and concupiscence might have been awakened in hearts which were the coldest and most chaste, if the law of the new cult had not placed a salutary restraint on the instinct of nature and the attractions of vice. This is why continence was the first virtue demanded of Christians in order to guarantee all the others.

\**Translator's Note*:—An *agape* was a Christian love-feast.

If this virtue had not been incessantly preached and profoundly rooted in beliefs of all, the *agapai* would have served only to propagate Prostitution. Nothing can give a complete idea of the exaltation of the faithful, who aspired only to martyrdom, and who willingly suffered martyrdom in their persons, in their desires and in their passions. This exaltation, turned to debauchery, as only too often happened when heresies arose, would have led to monstrous excess and would have discredited Christianity by consigning to universal contempt the apostles and their proselytes. We may imagine also the risks which the brothers and the sisters, assembled for prayer and penance, constantly ran in the midst of this contemplative existence. The women were wholly veiled and covered with garments which gave no hint of any bodily outline. These garments, of rough wool and of a uniform color, white, gray or black, did not woo curious glances by means of worldly ornaments; and the sense of smell was not awakened by the soft solicitations of perfumes. These women, whose buskins did not even appear from under the folds of their long robes, resembled, in the shadows, immobile statues or mourners at a funeral. The men, for their part, were not clad with less decency, with this difference, that they did not wear veils, but great hats with large hoods under which their faces, pale and emaciated, had the aspect of skulls. But even this was not enough to prevent nature from speaking more loudly than the will; this rebellious and fiery nature had to be restrained by the authority of precept and example.

And so, men and women might remain with impunity, for whole days and nights, promiscuously intermingled and face to face with one another, without any guilty acts and even without evil thoughts; they breathed the same air, they slept side by side in the catacombs and in the midst of the woods; they slept and woke only to pray. What is more, when the persecutions had forced the Christians to hide themselves and to live together in solitary places, the dogma of continence had already been firmly established among the sons and the brides of Jesus Christ, having subdued the most violent revolts of the flesh, despite the constant menace of discouragement and idleness. There was no longer any sex, so to speak, in this pious admixture of male and female saints, who inhabited together those subterranean retreats, where they often made their beds, and which were for them an inviolable tomb. It is not, then, surprising that the pagans, ignorant of the chastity which prevailed in this secret way of



life, should have imagined what they themselves would have done, with their own license of manners and abetted by the sensuality of their religion; they were unable to persuade themselves that the senses could accept such a slavery; they did not suspect what might be the power of prayer or what the fanaticism of religious devotion might accomplish. Hence, the odious calumnies which they circulated against the Christians, with whom they confused those impure heresiarchs whom the rising Church repelled with horror.

It was in the catacombs, in those vast excavations where Rome had found the material for her temples and her edifices, it was in those somber subterranean vaults, which served as a cemetery for slaves and the poorer population of the Eternal City, it was here that Christ found his first worshipers; for his Gospel was addressed, first of all, to the suffering and the unfortunate. The grave-diggers (*fossores*), who hollowed out the sepulchres and who never saw the sun, were the first to accept with confidence a religion which abased the proud and elevated the humble; they enriched themselves thus with all the joys of the Paradise which the Saviour promised them, and they felt themselves new men, they who were pursued by the horror and contempt of the living, whom they had the sorrowful privilege of interring. A similar rehabilitation awaited the abject classes which had need of recovering their self-esteem under the brand which public opinion had inflicted upon them. Christianity effaced every original blot, by means of repentance and baptism; it created in the old man a new man; it rendered pure the one who had been impure up to then; it placed an aureole of pardon on the brows of the stigmatized. There is, thus, a natural explanation of the regenerating and consoling effect it had on those degraded beings devoted to the service of Prostitution.

These wretched ones, who up to that time had not been even conscious of their degradation, were suddenly struck with shame and sorrow; their eyes were opened to the light of Evangelic morality, and they beheld with horror the depths of that abyss of vice into which they had hurled themselves. Some were converted and abjured their scandalous life; others continued it with tears and prayers, submitting to it as to an odious tyranny and offering to Heaven the holocaust of their sufferings. The religion of Christ was rapidly propagated among souls filled with remorse and bitterness, and the vilest prostitute lifted up her face and looked to Heaven.

The sermons of the apostles and their disciples were delivered, first of all, at the street-corners, at the gates of cities, in the public squares and the suburbs, wherever an idle and curious throng lent complacent ears to the speaker. The street-porters, sailors, gladiators and fugitive slaves, the vilest populace, in a word, pressed about the man of God who preached continence and the mortification of the flesh. The prostitutes were the most ardent in listening to this beneficent Word, which appeased the emotion of their hearts, and which gave them the strength to walk toward God. These unfortunate victims of debauchery were less horror-struck with themselves when they believed that they had communicated with the Redeemer, and frequently they would renounce their frightful trade in order to devote themselves to the mission which Jesus had given to virgins and martyrs. Such was, certainly, the imperious motive which led, in the first centuries, to the founding of the institution of Christian celibacy. Jesus had absolved Mary Magdalen for the reason that she had loved much; following Jesus' example, the holy confessors were indulgent toward the women who had lived in impurity, so long as they were pagans, and who, upon becoming Christians, entered upon the glorious life of repentance.

There are many legends of courtezans touched by the hand of the Lord, who followed thenceforth in his footsteps in order to achieve their own salvation by effacing the sins of their past life. All these poor women were animated by the Holy Spirit, like the three Marys who had left everything in order to follow Jesus. The more they had been defiled by sin, the more energetically they sought purification in the expiatory flames of faith. Many among them, and some of the most perverted ones, became saints and won the crown of martyrdom. The number of saints of this sort is so considerable that the Jesuit Father Théophile Rénaud has composed for them a special martyrology, in connection with the Egyptian Mary, who was their model and their patroness. It is no plan of ours to write the Golden Legend of all these beatified *meretrices*, nor shall we dispute the place they occupy, rightly or wrongly, among the blessed of Heaven; we shall merely borrow certain passages from the writings of the ancient hagiographers, in order to make evident the influence of Christianity on pagan Prostitution, and to establish this singular fact, namely, that the prostitutes had the signal honor of being the first to abjure the cult of the false gods and the pagan

emblems, always more or less indecent, of human sensuality.

Mary the Egyptian, who lived during the reign of Claudius, and who had hidden herself in the desert in order to do penance after her conversion, told her own story to the Abbot Zosimus, whom she had met when she was completely nude, her body burned and black with the sun. "I was born in Egypt," she tells him, covering her nudity with a mantle which Zosimus had given her. "In my twelfth year, I went to Alexandria, where for seventeen years I was a prostitute, and did not refuse myself to any man. When the people of this country wished to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to adore the true Cross, I begged the mariners who conveyed them there to take me with them. When they demanded of me the price of my passage, I said to them: 'Brothers, I have nothing to give, but take my body in payment of my passage.' They took me thus and disposed of my body by way of payment. We arrived at Jerusalem together, and having presented myself with the others at the gates of the church, in order to adore the true Cross, I was suddenly repelled by an invisible force; I returned a number of times in vain, and always I felt that I was being held back while the others entered without difficulty. Then I took counsel with myself and reflected that my numerous and filthy sins had been the cause of this repulsion. I began to sigh profoundly, to shed bitter tears and to chastise my body with my hands." She made a vow of chastity and placed herself under the protection of the Virgin Mary, who permitted her to enter the church and adore the true Cross. After which, she crossed the Jordan and lost herself in the desert, where she remained forty-seven years without seeing any man, living on three loaves of bread which she had brought with her. "During the first seventeen years of my solitary life," she says, "I had to suffer the temptations of the flesh; but by the grace of God, I have vanquished them all. . . ." Such were the examples which the Christian confessor offered the women of evil life who came in a crowd to hear him. The story which we have borrowed from a chronicler of the middle ages, is more decent than the one contained in the *Acts* of the Saint, paraphrased and commentated, with little restraint, by her historian, Théophile Rénaud. This Saint was the ordinary patron of courtezans, and the abandonment which she made of her body to the boatmen was represented on the windows of churches, notably on those of Sainte-Marie-de-la-Jussienne, a chapel situated formerly in the street which still preserves this name in Paris.

Another courtesan, who did not possess the reputation of Mary the Egyptian, also figures, among others of her kind, in the *Life of the Fathers*, where she makes honorable amends for her sins. It is possible, however, that this Saint was never anything more than a personification of the penitent debauchee and a touching emblem of the purification of a body that had been defiled. Her name was Thaïs and she dwelt in a city of Egypt which tradition does not name; her beauty was such that many foolish ones sold all they possessed in order to purchase her favors, and found themselves, upon leaving her couch, reduced to an extreme poverty; her lovers often fell into jealous quarrels, and her door-sill was bespattered with blood, we are told. The Abbot Paphnucius conceived the idea of converting her. He put on a secular habit, took a piece of money and offered it to her as a remuneration for the sin which he appeared to be desirous of committing with her. She accepted the money, saying: "Go to my room!" and when Paphnucius had entered this room and she had invited him to enter the bed, which was all covered with rich stuffs, he said to her: "Can we not go to a more secret place?" She led him, in succession, into a number of other rooms, and he always objected that he feared being seen: "Here is a room where no one enters," she remarked to him sorrowfully, "but if it is God that you fear, there is no place that is hidden from His sight." The old man, astonished at this language, inquired whether she knew that there was a God of reward and vengeance. She replied that she knew there was. "Then since you know it," cried Paphnucius with severity, "how does it come that you have been the ruin of so many souls? Yes, sinner, there is a God, and you shall render an account to him not merely of your own soul, but also for all those whom you have led into sin." At these words, Thaïs fell at Paphnucius' feet, shedding tears of contrition. "My father," she said, "I hope to be able to obtain through prayer a remission for my sins; I pray you to give me three hours in which to prepare myself to follow you; I will do then all that you command." The Abbot, having indicated the place where he would wait for her, left the house. Thaïs collected all that she had gained as a result of her sins, sumptuous vestments, rich jewels, splendid furniture, and made a joyful blaze of it all in the public square in the presence of all the people. "Come all," she cried, "come, you who have sinned with me, and see how I burn all that I have received from you!" These objects amounted in value to forty pounds in gold. When all had



been consumed, she rejoined Paphnucus, who conducted her to a convent of virgins, and there he shut her up in a little cell, the door of which he closed and locked, leaving but a narrow window through which each day slender rations of bread and a little water were passed in to the recluse. When the old man took his departure, Thaïs cried to him: "My father, where would you have me spill the water which nature expels from my body?" . . . "In your cell, as you deserve," he replied harshly. She demanded then how she should worship God. "You are not worthy of uttering the name of God," he replied, "nor of raising your hands toward heaven, for your lips are full of iniquity and your hands are laden with defilement. Prostrate yourself toward the East and repeat often these words: 'You who are my Creator, have pity on me!'" This harsh penance lasted for three years, after which Thaïs, saved by the Abbot Paphnucus, in spite of herself, returned to the world; she did not live more than three days after her sins had been remitted, but she died in peace like a virgin.

Saint Ephraim was less happy in the conversion of another woman of evil life who desired to lead him into sin with her. In order to be rid of her importunities, the Saint said to her: "Follow me!" She followed him; but in place of leading her to a secluded place, he conducted this woman into the middle of a street where there was a great throng of people; then, turning toward her: "Stop here," he said to her brusquely, "so that I may have relations with you!" . . . "I can not do that," she replied, blushing, "there are too many people here!" . . . "If you blush in the presence of men," replied Saint Ephraim with indignation, "should you not blush even more in the presence of your Creator, who discovers things hidden in the depths of darkness?" The courtesan, ashamed and confused, fled with lowered head, but she did not retire to a convent and did not give to the flames the product of her infamous trade. Often the Fathers of the Church did not fear to commit themselves with these creatures in the attempt to bring them back to God by compelling them to blush for their sins. The *Lives of the Fathers* are full of these adventures, which bear witness to the constancy and the charity of these venerable confessors. Two solitaries, who betook themselves to the city of Aegae in Thrace, suffered so much from heat along the way that they were forced to halt at an inn, despite the repugnance they felt at entering an evil place. There were in this inn a number of young debauchees and a prostitute. The latter, inspired by the Devil, approached one of the

two solitaries and invited him to commit an act of incontinence. The solitary repelled her with disgust and turned aside, praying God to pardon her. The brazen one, however, returned to the charge, with many teasing ways, and besought the poor solitary not to refuse what she asked of him; she uttered then the name of the Magdalen, who, she said, had found grace with Jesus. "That is true!" replied the solitary, "but when Jesus had spoken to this sinner, she ceased to be a courtesan." . . . "And I also!" cried this woman, obeying a sudden inspiration of the Holy Spirit. She parted, upon the spot, from her companions in debauchery, and piously followed the two solitaries, who led her to a convent of women, where she endured all sorts of macerations under the name of Mary. Her companions never reproached her with her former state, and all defiled as she had been before her miraculous conversion, she looked upon herself, from then on, as one of the most faithful of the brides of Christ.

A passage from the *Life of Saint Simeon Stylites*, who spent more than forty years on the crest of a column, where he had set up his anchorite's cell (he died in the year 460), shows us how the courtezans of all countries came to feed their eyes on the moving spectacle of his austerities and their ears on the encouragements of the Divine Word. Saint Simeon, from the top of his column, converted a multitude of vicious or perverse men, who came running from all sides to listen to his preachings. The *meretrices*, whom the renown of the Saint attracted in a throng, no sooner saw him praying and scattering blessings from his column than they would at once renounce their way of life, their pompous habits, their perfumes and their pleasures, in order to enter a convent, where they became saints, through the tears they shed and the detestation they acquired for their former sins; *Quid porro de meretricibus dicam, quae, ex diversis procul terris, ad servi Dei septum profectae, postquam illum conspexere, patriam suam deseruere, et severiorem ascetarum disciplinam in monasterio professae, sanctorum honorem commeruerunt, posteaquam, Domino largiente, praeteritorum criminum chirographa suis lacrymis* (*Acta Sanctorum*, t.II, p. 344). We may infer from this curious passage that the courtezans, touched by Grace, were forced to make a general confession and a detailed inventory of their sins, those sins which were always under their eyes during their long period of penitence, in order that they might not forget their former misdeeds but might weep for them eternally. The penitent courtezans might become catechumens as

soon as they had abjured their state of prostitution; thus, in the *Life of Saint Pelagia* (Arnaud d' Andilly, volume I, page 572), we see this famous comedienne, who had not yet renounced the world, taking part in a religious service in the church at Antioch, which she had never entered before; and yet, she had terribly scandalized the bishop and his suffragans, seated at the door of the Church of St. Julian, when she passed near them, gleaming with precious stones, with pearls and gold, which glittered from her perfumed slippers. As the haughty beauty passed, the holy bishop and his assessors beat a retreat, with lowered eyes and groaning souls, in order not to behold that diabolic face, those shoulders, that breast, those naked arms, which the temptress offered for their chaste regard.

This Saint Pelagia is not the one who was called Porphyra, in her life as a courtesan, and who lived at Tyre two or three centuries later. One day, this latter perceived in the street two solitaries who had come to seek out the poor and the sick. Porphyra suddenly received an inspiration of Divine Grace and ran to meet these good fathers, addressing the eldest of them. "Save me, my father," she cried, upon the impulse of her heart, "save me as Jesus Christ saved the sinner!" The solitary to whom she addressed these words, raised his eyes toward her and contemplated her with a gentle and melancholy air. "Follow me!" he said to her. She started to follow him at a distance, with humility and respect; but he went to her, took her hand and led her publicly through the city. When they were outside, they entered a church and Porphyra found there a newborn child whom she adopted. The solitary and the courtesan went away with the child, but there was a suspicion that they were responsible for the birth of this infant, a scandal which was put an end to by the solitary, who carried live coals under his robe in order to prove his innocence. Porphyra had taken the name of Pelagia and had shut herself up in a convent. Her example made such an impression upon the courtesans of Tyre that they desired to imitate her, and many among them consecrated themselves to God, in order to put on the robes of innocence and become the brides of Christ.

The first Saint Pelagia died at Antioch during the persecution of Licinius in the year 308; she hurled herself from a roof in order to escape the soldiers who were coming to get her and who had threatened her vow of chastity. During the same persecution, there were courtesans who suffered martyrdom, among them Theodote, Afra

and their followers, all of whom followed the trade of prostitution. The scholar, Ruinart, who places under this date the acts of Saint Theodote, makes this observation, which he has sought to support by a few authorities: "One does not see but one courtesan admitted to the communion of the faithful and received into the church before the period of the persecution of Licinius, but it cannot be denied that Theodote had made a traffic of her body (*quaestum corpore fecisse*).” The martyrdom of Saint Afra was even more remarkable than that of Theodote, who was insulted by being condemned to resume her shameful trade. Afra appeared before Gaius, the judge, who received her smilingly. "As I understand, you are a *meretrix*," he said to her. "Sacrifice to the gods! You should do it all the more willingly, for the reason that a *meretrix* has nothing to gain from the God of the Christians." Afra kept silent, and in a low voice commended herself to Christ. "Sacrifice," replied the judge, "sacrifice, so that the gods may grant that you be loved by your lovers as they have loved you up to now! Sacrifice, so that your lovers may bring you much silver!"

Afra blushed at this allusion to her past life. "I shall never again accept that horrible silver," she cried with a gesture of disgust, "for the silver which I have gained in this manner I have cast far from me, since it was not gained with a good conscience (*de bonâ conscientiâ*). I have prayed one of my poor brothers, who did not want to accept it, to purify it by accepting it and by praying for me. If I have rid myself of property so ill acquired, which weighed upon my heart, how can I think of acquiring more in the same manner?" . . . "Christ does not find you worthy," replied Gaius. "It is then without reason that you called him your God; he does not recognize you as His, for a woman who is a *meretrix* can not call herself a Christian." . . . "As a matter of fact, I do not deserve the name of Christian! And yet, the mercy of God, which judges not my merits but my faith, is quite willing to receive me into Paradise." Gaius then pronounced his judgment: "We command that the courtesan Afra (*publicam meretricem*), who has confessed herself a Christian and who has refused to sacrifice to the gods, be burned alive!"

Afra walked to her punishment, while her two followers, Eunomia and Eutropia, who had been baptized like her by the Bishop Narcissus, remained veiled and silent, on the banks of the river, hoping that they might share the martyrdom of their mistress, even as they had shared her sin (*simulque fuerant in peccato*). Afra, in mounting the



pyre, uttered this prayer, which was adopted in the Middle Ages as that of repentant prostitutes:

“All powerful Lord God Jesus Christ, who hast called not the just but sinners to repentance; Jesus, whose promises are true and manifest, since Thou hast deigned to say that when a sinner has been converted from his iniquities, at that very hour Thou wilt not remember any more the sins of the penitent; receive then, at this time the expiation of my death (*Accipe in hac hora passionis meae poenitentiam*)!”

A courtesan martyred in the name of Christ always won over a throng of victims from Prostitution and her death always led to fresh martyrdoms.

## CHAPTER XXXII

THE Christians were so proud of their chastity, they attached so great a price to it and so feared to lose or alter this treasure, that their persecutors took a malign pleasure in tormenting them in their possession of a blessing of which they would not have thought of depriving them if the Christians had not, in a manner, hurled thus a defiance at pagan philosophy and religion. Thus is to be explained that strange punishment which consisted in giving a Christian woman, whether a virgin or not, to the infamous brutalities of public Prostitution. Such a punishment as this is too often evident in the Acts of the Saints to leave any doubt as to its nature as an emblem of the fury of the idolaters. The hagiographers, on this point go into the most singular details, and St. Ambrose, in Book III of his *Treatise on Virgins*, where he complacently relates the martyrdom of Saint Theodora, gives us to understand that this drastic punishment was almost always reserved for virgins who refused to sacrifice to the gods. Moreover, as we have already said, this was, perhaps, but the application of the old Roman law which forbade putting a virgin to death. But in addition, there was certainly, also, the intention to dishonor the Christian woman in her own eyes as in those of her coreligionists. The sacrifice to the gods, demanded of every woman accused of being a Christian, was, for the latter, but a preliminary to Prostitution, for the majority of the gods and goddesses appeared to have been invented to deify the sensual passions and debauchery: "The Gentiles," says St. Clement of Alexandria, "renounce all sentiment of shame and modesty, keeping in their houses pictures in which the gods are represented amid the most infamous transports of pleasure; they adorn their bedrooms with these indecent paintings and look upon the most monstrous incontinence with a sort of piety. From your bed your eyes look upon the image of Venus and the bird which flies towards Leda; the more immodest a picture is, the more excellent it appears; you have an engraving made, and you take for a subject the debaucheries of Jupiter! Such are your models, such the infamous ideas that you have of your gods; such the criminal doctrines that you teach and practice! . . . You commit fornication and adultery with

your eyes before you commit them in reality;\* you commit an outrage against the body of man, and you annihilate the Divinity in you by your unworthy actions!" The Christians, thus, would have believed that they were committing a fornication or an adultery in sacrificing to the pagan gods, in approaching the latter's altars, by casting on those altars a grain of incense, or by lifting their eyes toward those statues which frequently flaunted modesty and taught sin, by their attributes and by their mute provocations. Virgins turned away their gaze or veiled their eyes in horror in the presence of these obscene divinities, and the judge, then, as though to prepare them for a sacrifice to Venus, to Isis, to Bacchus or to some other idol, would send them for a rude apprenticeship in a house of prostitution.

It was, then, with a profound despair that the holy women endured this horrible violence; they would beseech their Divine Bridegroom to call them to Himself before their cherished purity fell a prey to the impious ones; they would abase themselves in prayer; they would have preferred a thousand deaths, a thousand tortures, to the loss of their innocence. It would appear that the exposition of Christians to the mercy of debauchees was not put into practice before the terrible persecution instituted by Marcus Aurelius; for Tertullian, in his *Apologetic*, speaks of this species of punishment as a recent invention, representing a refinement of cruelty (*exquisitor crudelitas*). "Finally, in condemning a virgin to a *lenon* rather than to a *lion*," he says, with a bitter play of words, "you confess that an outrage to modesty is, to Christians, more atrocious than all the tortures and all the various kinds of death (*Proxime ad lenonem damnando christianam, potiusquam ad leonem, confessi estis labem pudicitiae apud anos atrociozem omni poena et omni morte reputari*)." But Jesus Christ frequently took pity on these chaste brides, and sometimes he would accord them the grace of dying safe and sound, sometimes he would cause his Angels to descend to them in order to protect and exhort them, sometimes he would strike with impotence the most formidable executioners, or he would suddenly convert the latter into Christians and confessors. "When the implacable persecution was on in full force," St. Basil tells us (*De Vera Virginitate*, Section 52), "virgins, chosen on account of their faith in their Bridegroom, having been given as playthings to the impious houses, would preserve the purity of their bodies, and that only by the Grace of Jesus Christ, who desired to show that

\**Translator's Note*:—Cf. the Tolstoyan doctrine.

all the efforts of the impious were powerless to defile the flesh of his virgins, and that the bodies of these latter would remain inviolable under his safeguard, as the result of a miracle." For it is necessary in the Latin text of this passage to correct a word, and to read *liminibus* in place of *luminibus*, which gives us a meaning more conformable to the customs of the persecutors, in the following phrase: "*Electae virginies propter Sponsi fidem, ad illudendum impiis luminibus traditae, corporibus inviolatae perdurarunt.*" It is probable that St. Basil was speaking of the dicterions or the lupanars, which ordinarily received Christian virgins who had been condemned to Prostitution, but the Latin translator has replaced the Greek word with a circumlocution, *impiis liminibus*,\* which is descriptive enough of those evil places, while a copyist, on the other hand, has changed the sense of the phrase, a sense which we have proposed to reëstablish in passing.

We have not the necessary space to relate here all the martyrdoms, which began or ended with an enforced Prostitution. It would take an entire book for this subject, if the author were to make use, from this point of view alone, of the enormous collection of the Bollandists and study the *Acts* of the saints who were more or less persecuted in the matter of their virginity or their chastity. We shall merely group together a few related facts in order to make evident in what manner and to what end Paganism attacked Christian modesty. We shall be able to understand, thus, with what a pure love the holy women gave themselves to Jesus Christ, when we look upon the gracious portrait which St. Augustine has drawn of Christian charity in his *Confessions*: "Chastity presents herself to me with a face full of majesty and gentleness, adding to a gracious smile caresses that are unaffected, in order to give me the hardihood to approach her; she extends, to receive and embrace me, her charitable arms, between which I see so many persons who well may serve as examples to me. There are a great number of young lads and young girls, of men and women of every age, of venerable widows and of virgins who have almost reached old age. And this excellent virtue is not a sterile but a fecund one in these good souls, since it is the mother of so many celestial desires, which it conceives of Thee, my God, Who art her veritable and her Holy Bridegroom!" This chastity was as jealous of its own preservation in old age as in infancy, and persecution took no account of

\**Translator's Note*:—Literally, "impious thresholds." The confusion is between the dative plural of *limen*, "threshold," and that of *lumen*, "light."



age when it destined a victim for the outrages of Prostitution. St. Agnes was not thirteen years old, and the seven virgins of Ancyra could not remember ever having been young.

These seven virgins, although aged from seventy to eighty years each, were condemned, as Christians, to be given over to the debauchees of Ancyra. These debauchees, however, did not have the courage to make them the victims of a cruel persecution; a single one among them dared attempt the adventure, but the Spirit of God came between him and the holy virgins. The prefect of Ancyra, furious at perceiving that his judgment was not being executed, condemned them out of malice, on account of their invincible virginity, to the service of the temple of Diana. By a singular circumstance, which the one who repeats the legend does not justify, they were sent utterly naked to bathe the statue of the goddess in a sacred lake near the city. The procession had to pass through the city, and the nudity of the virgins was a surprise to the spectators. It was in the waters of the lake that the victims found a refuge from the curious glances of the crowd. This strange martyrdom occurred in the fourth century, according to Nilus, who has preserved for us the incredible tale. The other saints who were exposed to pagan brutality were almost all of the same period. Theodora, Irene, Agnes and Euphemia were tested in the same fashion in the horrible persecution which was ordered by Diocletian in the year 303, a persecution which lasted until the year 311, and which made more martyrs than all those that had gone before. Never had more dolorous punishments been conceived for Christian chastity. Thus, in the Thebaid, women were fastened by a foot and reared in the air by machines to remain suspended there, heels over head and utterly naked. The genius of Prostitution appeared to have inspired judges and executioners with a prodigious lust for infamous tortures.

The poet, Aurelius Prudentius, who wrote more than sixty years after the horrors of this persecution, undoubtedly was recalling it, when he depicted the agony of a virgin subjected to pagan outrages. If the virgin did not lean her head against Minerva's altar and did not demand grace of that goddess, she was covered with insults until she was led away to the lupanar. All the ardent youth of the city would hurl themselves upon the unfortunate one and dispute the right to insult her (*novum ludibriorum mancipium petat*). She was ordered to halt at the corner of every street; but the virgin would

flee all the more quickly, turning her head and hiding her face, pursued by an impatient throng; she feared that some libertine might lift a hand to her and offer a cruel insult to her sex (*ne petulantius quisquam verendum conspiceret locum*): and under the threat of this peril she would hasten to find shelter for her virginity in a lupanar, as though she would there find safety, and as though the lupanar could be only chaste and inviolable for her. Nothing is more touching than this picture of Christian modesty.

St. Agnes, in fact, did not lose her virginity by being led into a Roman lupanar. She belonged to one of the first families of that city, and although barely thirteen years old, she had already been sought in marriage by a number of young patricians. Her great beauty did not turn her from the austere life which she had embraced. She was denounced as a Christian to the prefect, Symphronius, by the very son of this prefect, who was one of the suitors whom she had disdained; she proclaimed haughtily her belief, and declared that she had consecrated her virginity to Jesus Christ. "You must choose between two courses," the judge told her. "Either you must sacrifice to Vesta with the Vestals or you must prostitute yourself with the courtezans in a lupanar frequented by soldiers, where you will receive no aid from the Christians who have seduced you (*aut cum meretricibus scortaberis in contubernio lupanari*)."

Agnes replied to Symphronius by defying him. The latter, irritated by her audacity, ordered that she be despoiled of her garments and led away to a lupanar, preceded by a herald with a trumpet crying: "Agnes, a sacrilegious virgin, having blasphemed the gods, is delivered to public Prostitution (*scortum lupanaribus datam*). The prefect's order was carried out. But Agnes' clothes had barely been removed when her hair fell down and formed a veil about her body. An Angel walked at her side and cast a divine splendor about her. She entered the lupanar, resplendent with light, but her modesty was assured by the gleaming whiteness of the robe which covered her from head to foot. The debauchees who were waiting for her in this evil place did not dare approach her, but gazed upon her in terror, until, finally, they fell at her feet imploring her forgiveness. The son of the prefect came running with his companions in pleasure to assure himself of the fine booty which had been promised him; but as soon as he stretched out a hand toward Agnes, he fell dead, as though struck by a thunderbolt. Such is the account given by St. Ambrose in his *Epistles* (Book IV, Epistle 34);

but the *Acts* of the Saint, published by Ruinart, add to this recital many details which are important for the history of Prostitution. According to these *Acts*, as soon as the Saint had arrived at the lupanar, she was clad in a chemise of transparent gauze of the sort the prostitutes wore in these evil places in order the better to arouse lust by permitting a glimpse or a view of that which would inflame it. The populace at once invaded the place, and each endeavored to enforce his right as being the first comer; but this ardent immodesty was at once extinguished and vanquished; the libertines remained motionless, trembling, undecided, altogether lacking in strength and will; they blushed with shame and retired without having touched the Saint, who stood gazing upon them calmly. The lupanar was only emptied to be filled again; but the miracle was repeated, and the brazen ones found themselves forbidden even before they had attempted a violence which the young Agnes did not seem to fear. All fled in terror and with respect, and none dared re-enter the den of Prostitution. One only there was who came once more: the rumor spread that this was Symphronius' own son, himself; he did not doubt the success of his shameful enterprise; he confidently and impetuously came forward toward Agnes. He stretched out his arms to seize her, but fell dead at her feet. In the meanwhile, his friends were awaiting him at the door, curious and anxious to know if the wolf had succeeded in ravishing the lamb of Christ, according to the words of the legend. When he did not reappear and no sound was heard from Agnes' cell, one man dared to enter; at sight of the dead, he was troubled and invoked the mercy of the Saint and was converted. None, thereafter, was hardy enough to attempt to carry out the order of Symphronius, before whom Agnes again was led, fortified in her virginity. Agnes consented to resurrect the dead man, whom she had sacrificed in the defense of her modesty, and the resurrected thought no more of taking Christian virgins; but this miraculous resurrection was attributed to magic invocations, and Agnes, condemned to be burned alive, took with her to the flames the flower of her virginity. The learned editor of this legend mentions the tradition which would situate under the vaults of the Agonal Circus, where the public games took place, this lupanar in which Agnes' virginity had won so transcendent a victory.

This form of punishment is frequently mentioned in the *Acts of the Saints*, but always under different circumstances, which seem to

indicate a variation on the same theme. It is not probable that the same facts would recur so often with so much similarity. The most celebrated of all the martyrdoms of this sort was that of St. Theodora, who undoubtedly owes the celebrity of her name to a bad tragedy by Pierre Corneille, rather than to the legend paraphrased by St. Ambrose and to her *Acts*, published by Ruinart. She was a noble lady of Alexandria. The judge cited her to appear before him and ordered her to sacrifice to the gods. "According to the Emperor's orders," he told her, "you virgins who refuse to offer incense to the gods are to be exposed in evil places. But I feel a pity for your birth and for your beauty." . . . "You may do what pleases you" replied Theodora. "My will shall have no part in the violences which you perpetrate." She was slapped in the face, by order of the judge, who felt that he had to subdue this rebellious one. "Despite your illustrious rank," he said to her, "you force me to insult you in front of the people, who are awaiting your decision. I will give you three days to reflect; after that time, if you refuse to sacrifice, I shall expose you in a lupanar, so that those of your own sex may witness your dishonor and mend their ways." The three days having passed, Theodora remained as firm as ever in her resolution. "Theodora," the judge said to her, "since you persist in your refusal to sacrifice, I order that you be led to a lupanar. We shall see if that Christ of yours will deliver you." . . . "God, Who up to this time has preserved me without blemish," Theodora replied gently, "God knows what will happen; He is powerful enough to protect me against those who would do me injury." She was led to a house of Prostitution; in entering it, she addressed a fervent prayer to her Celestial Bridegroom. The people surrounded the house, awaiting the outcome of a martyrdom which was not a new thing for them, and which ordinarily ended with a sacrifice of the victim's virginity. This time, there were more spectators than actors. No one offered to insult the Christian woman. Finally, a soldier parted the crowd and entered the place of punishment. Theodora shuddered at the sound of his steps; she drew about her, with trembling hands, the few garments which had been left her, and which did not wholly hide what she was endeavoring to veil. This soldier was a Christian who had taken a disguise in order to come to her and save her; he besought her to change garments with him, and finally succeeded in persuading her, by painting for her a hideous picture of the fate which awaited her in this villainous house.



Theodora, disguised as a soldier, covering her face with her cape and her two hands, was enabled, happily, to leave this den of vice without being forced to respond to the questions of the curious and the bursts of laughter that pursued her steps. An hour later, the Christian, led before the judge, was condemned to be decapitated for having assisted in Theodora's deliverance. The latter reappeared and disputed with her liberator the crown of martyrdom. "It is I who have been condemned," Didymus told her. . . . "You have tried hard enough to save my honor," Theodora replied, "but I shall not permit you to save my life; for it was infamy that I fled and not death." They were decapitated together, and Theodora died a virgin.

Palladius, in his *Life of the Fathers* (*Vita Patrum*, Cap. CXLVIII: *De foeminâ nobilissima quae fuit semper virgo*), reports a very similar incident, which must have taken place a century before, but the hero of which he does not name, although he borrows his tale from "an ancient book," as he says, "written by Hippolytus, who was a friend of the apostles." A noble and virtuous young woman dwelt at Corinth in the austere practice of Christian celibacy. She was denounced to the judge in a time of persecution. This judge had an immoderate passion for women, and in order to satisfy this carnal passion, he frequently had recourse to the offices of lenons and the merchants of Prostitution (*cauponatores*). These latter had boasted of the marvelous beauty of the Christian virgin; he found her still more amazing than he had imagined, and spared nothing in the effort to seduce this virgin, who repelled at once his prayers and his threats. Torments had no effect with this pure and gentle victim. The judge, then, angered at this resistance, conceived the idea, in order to conquer her, of condemning this Saint to public Prostitution. He placed her in a lupanar and commanded the master of the place (*jussit ei qui eas possidebat*) as follows: "Take this girl and pay me every day three pieces of gold (*nummos*)." The proprietor of the lupanar accepted the bargain and proceeded to carry it out upon the spot. The new prostitute was advertised to the libertines of the city by means of a signboard, which gave her name and price. The debauchees came running, purse in hand, disputing as to who should be the first to approach her; they disputed, these unworthy ones, the treasure of that virginity which did not even attempt to defend itself. "Listen," said the poor woman, who could not resign herself to suffer martyrdom; "I must reveal to you what I have hidden from

the lenon and what I beg of you to keep secret. I have an ulcer (*ulcus*) in my shameful parts; this ulcer exhales a bad odor; moreover, it is of a contagious character. I do not want you to despise me. . . . Give me a few days rest and I will give myself to you when I am cured." They all retired without asking any more. The virgin, seeing herself delivered from these executioners, at least for a few days, prayed God to complete her deliverance by giving her death. Suddenly, there came into the lupanar a young man who appeared quite too energetic to be capable of being convinced by the fable of the ulcer. The unfortunate virgin was terrified, believing that her virginity was doomed; but this young man was a Christian, pious and chaste, who had learned of the risk which his sister in Jesus Christ was running. He had formed a plan to save her, and had gained admittance to the place by paying a price in silver. He changed garments with her, and he remained, his face veiled, in the obscene place which the girl had left. When this substitution was discovered, the Christian was condemned to death and given to the beasts, or rather, according to one commentator, to all the horrors of unnatural Prostitution.

This was not the only Christian woman who left the lupanar a virgin; legend cites another who, after having, in the character of a *meretrix*, prostituted her body in a place of debauchery, recovered her virginity by going to her death. This was the famous St. Theodote, that courtesan of whom we have already spoken, who suffered persecution about the year 249, during the reign of the Emperor Philip. When the praetor ordered her to sacrifice to the gods: "It is enough," she cried, "that I am a prostitute to all the world. I shall not add this to my other crimes in order that, on the day of judgment, I may at least be able to say that I have not betrayed the true God!" She was sent to prison, where she passed twenty-one days without taking any nourishment.

When she reappeared before the judge, she addressed a public prayer to Christ: "I beseech Thee," she said, "to absolve me of the crime into which I have fallen at the instigation of the devil, for it is without reason that they call me a *meretrix*. Fortify my courage and look upon me with clemency, so that these atrocious tortures may not possess even the power to move my heart." The judge proceeded to interrogate her. "As to my station in life," she said proudly, "I am a courtesan, but as to my religion, I am a Chris-

tian, if only I may be all the while worthy of Christ." She was condemned; the crowd exhorted her to sacrifice to the gods; her ancient lovers supplicated her to spare her own life. "Hang her from the gibbet," said the judge, "and tear her flesh with combs of iron." She bore it all, singing the praises of the Lord. Vinegar and lead were poured upon her wounds; her teeth were drawn; but she did not cease to pray in a loud voice. Finally, in order to make her keep silent, they stoned her. The Christians who buried her body were surprised, upon making an examination, to discover that this courtesan was a virgin.

Sometimes, in place of sending a virgin into a lupanar, the judge would abandon her to some old libertine, who would engage not to bring her back until she had been defiled and rendered fit for capital punishment. This was what happened to St. Dionysia, who appeared before the proconsul Optimus, with three Christians named Peter, Andrew and Paul. The proconsul threatened her with being burned alive if she did not sacrifice to the idols. "My God is greater than you," was her response, "and that is why I do not fear your threats!" The proconsul did not send her to the pyre, but abandoned her to the good pleasure of two young debauchees (*ad corrumpebam*). These two led her away with them to their house and united their efforts to make her yield to their criminal obsessions. This unequal struggle lasted until the middle of the night, without their being able to triumph over a virtue that was so courageous (*ut ei vim turpitudinis inferrent*). Then their ardor commenced to weaken and the demon of indecency forsook them (*marescebat eorum cupiditatis libido*). Whereupon, a sudden light flooded all the room, and an Angel appeared who took the despairing virgin under his protection. The two would-be corruptors, frightened, fell to the knees of the chaste young girl, who raised them up, smilingly: "Fear nothing," she said to them, "for this is my tutor and my guardian; it is for him that I have submitted to your impotent insults." The two pagans besought her to intercede for them with this divine protector, and promised to be converted, swearing that they would never again raise a hand against the virgins of the Lord.

We are authorized in believing that these attacks on Christian virgins took place, principally, during the great persecution of Diocletian. The prefect of Egypt, named Hierocles, had enjoined all the judges to apply, without exception, this penalty to all women

who proclaimed themselves virgins for the love of Christ. This Hierocles, whom the *Acts* of the martyrs frequently referred to as Heraclius, was especially bent upon the persecution of women, and he gave the latter over without mercy to the agents of Prostitution (*sanctas Dei virgines lenonibus tradendum*, say the *Acts*, published by Ruinart, Volume II., Page 196). It is not difficult to believe that, in many cases, the judge himself did not disdain to be the executioner of his own orders. This was the case with the judge, Pristus, who did much harm to Christians at the same period. The *Golden Legend* pictures him as an iniquitous and lustful man. Euphemia, daughter of a senator, went to accuse herself before Pristus and to claim the privilege of martyrdom, complaining of the fact that she had been spared this blessing theretofore, despite her profession of the Christian faith. Pristus caused her to be beaten with rods and sent to prison. He was not slow in following her there, and endeavored to violate her, but the Saint defended herself and the Grace of God paralyzed pagan lubricity. Pristus believed that he had been overcome by the wiles of a sorceress, and so, charged an agent with the task of seducing with promises or vanquishing with threats the intrepid prisoner; but the agent was not able to open the door of the dungeon, against which even hatchets were merely blunted, but was finally laid hold of by the Devil, who provoked him to tear himself to pieces with his own hands. The judge vainly exposed the virgin to various tortures, which could not succeed in depriving her of life, much less of her virginity. And so, he gave orders to give her over to all the young libertines who desired to abuse her, until she died; but these libertines were not so anxious to have an affair with a magician, and the most audacious would not cross the threshold of the cell where the Saint had locked herself in the expectation of being dishonored. One of them, however, to whom lust had given heart, dared to enter this cell; he was surprised enough to find Euphemia surrounded by virgins who were praying with her. He timidly confessed his evil intentions, and then became a Christian. Euphemia thus remained a virgin, despite the detestable projects of Pristus, who wished to decapitate her, but who did not even have time to unveil the mysteries of this stainless body, for at the very moment when he was about to profane, with an immodest gaze, that virginity of which death had robbed him, he was devoured by a lion which sprang out of the grave, and which did not leave a single trace of



this persecutor of virgins. "Holy and triumphant virgin," cries St. Ambrose, from whom we have borrowed this tale, "in receiving the crown of virginity you merited also the palm of martyrdom!" Such examples as these it was that won for virginity and Christian chastity those souls rescued from Prostitution and the impurities of Paganism.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

WE HAVE said that if the continence and chastity of the first Christians were suspect in the eyes of the Gentiles, the heretics had done only too much to justify the opinion of the credulous in this respect. These heretics appeared, above all, to have taken upon themselves the task of defiling Evangelic morality and of snuffing out the spiritual torch of Christianity. These were not, moreover, pagans in disguise who had penetrated the sanctuary of the Church of Christ in order to dishonor it by introducing the impurities of idolatry and by improving upon the doctrines of Epicurus and the ancient Greek philosophers; these were enlightened Christians, if one may make use of this modern expression; these were fanatic innovators, who desired to find a powerful auxiliary to pleasure in the triumph of a religion that was wholly metaphysical. For three centuries this schism did not cease to propagate itself under various forms in the very bosom of the nascent Church, and Prostitution was almost always employed as the means of propaganda by those who taught these heresies, which frequently came from the beliefs and the religious customs of India.

The first heresy which made an inroad into Christianity goes back to the time of the apostles and derives, it may be, from the ancient traditions left by the cult of Baal in Judea. The second *Epistle* of St. Peter, which Christian chronology dates from the year 65, appears to have reference to this sect, the founder of which was one of the seven deacons of the Church. "But there were false prophets also among the people," said St. Peter, "even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." St. Peter goes on to say that God, who let loose the deluge on the ancient world, while sparing Noah and his family, who reduced to ashes the impious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, by rescuing Lot from impure contact with the inhabitants of these two cities (*a luxuriosa conversatione eripuit*),—this same God shall deliver from persecution those who honor Him and shall reserve the punishment

of sinners to the day of judgment. Among these sinners, He distinguishes particularly those who, ensnared by the flesh, walk in the way of iniquity (*qui post carnem in concupiscentia impudicitæ ambulant*), despising all domination, audaciously satisfied with themselves, and fearing not the sects of the blasphemers. "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings (*coinquinationibus et maculae deliciis affuentes*) while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin (*oculos habentes plenos adulterii et incessabilis delicti*), being unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices, cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." We may see from this passage, which is confused enough, that these heretics did not pride themselves on remaining chaste and pure; but it is difficult, from the text of the *Vulgate*, to determine the sort of impurity with which St. Peter is reproaching them. One commentator, giving to this comparison of the Nicolaïtes with Balaam an interpretation which we do not agree, supposes that their heresy had given the ass an infamous rôle to play, if we may explain in this sense a versicle which we shall not translate, inasmuch as we do not wish to add or take away anything from the original: *Subjugale mutum animal, hominis voce loquens, prohibuit prophetæ insipientiam*.

However, if there was no question of bestiality in this heresy of the Nicolaïtes, we may not doubt that sodomy was to be found mingled with it under the cloak of Catholic fraternity. The Fathers of the Church, who speak of the Nicolaïtes with as much horror as indignation (St. Ignatius, *Epist. ad Trall, et ad Philadelph.* St. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, I., III; St. Irenæus; St. Epiphany, etc.), had not witnessed the inception of this abominable sect and knew of it only what they had learned from oral tradition. According to a number of them, the deacon, Nicholas, whom St. Irenæus formally describes as the *master of the Nicolaïtes*, had conceived his odious heresy by way of revenging himself on the apostles, notably on St. Peter, who had blamed him for having taken back his wife after

he had separated from her in order to preserve his continence. Nicholas, in order to excuse his weakness, began to teach brazenly that, in order to achieve eternal salvation, it was necessary to be defiled with all sorts of impurities. The reasoning on which he based this monstrous doctrine was not of a nature calculated to absolve him; he pretended that a defiled body must be more agreeable to God, for the reason that the merits of the Divine Redeemer would have more room to work upon it in order to render it worthy of Paradise. Other Fathers of the Church endeavored to deny Nicholas' responsibility for this execrable heresy which, under his name, was so widespread among the Christians. They declared that this Nicholas had lived chastely under the conjugal roof, having no relations with other than his legitimate wife, who gave him a son and a number of daughters. The son became Bishop of Samaria and the daughters died virgins. As to the notorious precepts which were attributed to him, he was guilty of having employed but one ambiguous expression, by saying *abuse the flesh* in place of *mortify the flesh*. His disciples, it was said, had taken literally this vicious saying, and they therefore did not refrain from *abusing* the flesh, on the responsibility of the pious deacon who had meant no harm by it all.

This was not the only exaggeration of the legend relating to Nicholas, with whom the Church found frequent cause to be annoyed on account of the excesses of his supposed imitators. It was said that his wife was very beautiful and that he, for his part, was very jealous. The apostles reproached him for his jealousy, so much so that, in order to escape their constant sarcasms, he summoned his wife to an assembly of Christians and, in a loud tone of voice, authorized her to take whom she would as a husband. The legend goes no further than this, and we do not know whether or not Nicholas' wife took him at his word. However this may be, we may see in this conduct of Nicholas an excitation to debauchery and a plenary indulgence accorded to the sensual desires. The first Nicolaites were not interested in finding dogmas for their licentious heresy; they changed nothing in the Christian teaching, except that they preached by example a forgetfulness of all sexual modesty. Later, in order to justify their separation from the Church, they attacked the divinity of Jesus Christ and maintained that the most illicit pleasures were good and holy, seeing that the Son of God was able to experience them by dwelling in an earthy and sensible body. Soon, without



abandoning their obscene practices, their teachings began to approach those of the Gnostics, and to be confounded with the latter, new sects being formed under the names of *Philionites*, of *Stratiotics*, of *Levites* and of *Borborites*. These new sects, the abominations of which St. Epiphany described at the end of the fourth century, had, all of them, the same object, the satisfaction of the carnal appetites and a return to the instincts of nature. They were perpetuated secretly down to the twelfth century, when they endeavored to emerge from their obscurity, only to return to it forever.

The heresies of the first centuries were divided, so to speak, into two distinct classes; those of the body and those of the spirit. These latter, among which it is sufficient to name those of Sabellius, Eutychus, Symmachus and Jovinian, were only concerned with questions of philosophy, religion and abstract metaphysics; they lost themselves generally in speculations relative to the divinity and mission of Jesus Christ. The heresies of the body occasioned, with imaginations more or less ingenious or extravagant, a prodigious outburst of sensuality, as object or as means. Gnosticism, emanating from the Asiatic religions, had come to fasten itself upon all the branches of the Christian religion, and came near stifling the latter with its foliage, which was frequently full of poison and of scandal. The doctrine which was most common among these heretics was that of the community of women and the promiscuity of the sexes. The Carpocratians and the Valesians professed this doctrine. Carpocratus, who had studied in the pagan school of Alexandria, was but a disciple of Epicurus, although he called himself a Christian. He made of Jesus Christ, as a matter of fact, an Epicurean philosopher, who had been placed, he said, in direct communication with God, who had conquered the demons who were the creators of the world. These demons having been locked in Hell, evil no longer existed upon the earth, and everything which might be done by men was, therefore, licit and authorized, so long as they followed this maxim of the Gospel: do not do to another what you would not have him do to you. It is easy to understand how such a precept as this left nothing of Christian continence, and how the fiery Carpocratians must have abused themselves and others in the interest of their brutal passions. Modesty, that noble and touching fiction which distinguished intelligent beings from the brute, was suppressed by these sectaries, who denied it, and who looked upon it as injurious to

Divinity. Carpocratus did not take his heresy with him to the tomb; his son, Epiphany, who also had learned the Epicurean and the Platonic philosophy in the schools of Alexandria, had time to complete the philosophic system of his father, although he died at the age of eighteen, by decreeing that women should be held in common among the Carpocratians, and that no woman should have the right to deny her favors to anyone who demanded them of her by virtue of a natural right. Epiphany was looked upon as a god, and a statue was raised to him at Samos, a city of Cephalonia. One woman of this sect, named Marcellina, came to Rome about the year 160 and there made many proselytes by the sweat of her body. It was at the *agapai*, or nocturnal love feasts, that the Carpocratians and the Epiphanites committed their infamies: they would eat and drink with little sobriety; then when the meal was over and grace had been said, the head of the table would cry out three times: "Take away the lights and the profane!" Then the torches would be extinguished, and what took place in the darkness, without distinction of sex, age or relationship, left no traces in the memory of man, the whole being, in the eyes of the doctors of this sect, but a confused replica of nature before the act of creation.

The Fathers of the Church, St. Epiphany (*Haer.*, 27), thundered against the mysterious prostitutions of these heretics, who appeared to have taken upon themselves the task of dishonoring the Christians; but the sectaries of Carpocratus and Epiphany were saints compared to the Cainites and the Adamites, whom the twelfth century saw greatly multiplied in the bosom of the Church. The name of the inventor of Cainism is not known; there is ground for supposing that he was one of those audacious Gnostics, who had no fear in surrendering to the most perverse impulses of humanity in order indecently to dominate a credulous herd of slaves. The Cainites took for a dogma the rehabilitation of evil and the triumph of matter over spirit. They set themselves thus, *à rebours*, to the interpretation of the Holy Books, and they honored as victims, who had been unjustly sacrificed, the most execrable types of human depravity, all who had been marked with the scourge of Divine reprobation, from Cain to Judas Iscariot. Cain, above all, had the honor of exciting to the highest degree their admiration and esteem. They justified thus the murder of Abel. There is to be recognized in this frightful doctrine a breath of Persian Arimanism, applied to a reading of the Bible and

the "Gospels. These sectaries glorified in imitating the hideous vices which were attributed to Cain, and which they zealously sought among the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; they protested against the destruction of those cursed cities, and they flattered themselves that they would one day be able to rebuild them under the protection of Cain, who personified for them the principle of evil, or the Ariman of Zoroaster. The Fathers of Church were, however, misled, it may be, in combatting a heresy which they did not fundamentally understand, for it is difficult to believe that such turpitudes could take place publicly, or be produced under the instigation of a Christian faith. The Cainites did not deny the divinity of Jesus Christ and his work of redemption. How reconcile this belief with a cult of evil and abomination? "There was no bodily impurity into which they did not plunge," says Bayle, who merely analyzes the statements of Tertullian, of Theodoret, of St. Irenaeus and of St. Epiphany, "no crime in which they did not believe they had the right to participate, for according to their abominable principles, the path of salvation was diametrically opposed to the precepts of the Scriptures. They imagined that every sensual pleasure was presided over by some genius; it was for this reason that they did not fail, when they were preparing for some indecent action, nominally to invoke the genius who was in charge of the pleasure which they planned to taste." This definition of the cult of the Cainites would tend to prove that they were not free from the habits of pagan idolatry, and that they merely had replaced the old gods with certain genii. Nothing has been preserved of their books, and we may regret especially their famous *Ascension of St. Paul to Heaven*, a sort of Apocalypse in which the vision of St. Paul revealed to these heretics an incredible doctrine of impurity. However this may be, there is no doubt that they were more or less given to the distractions of anti-physical love; and it was in order to seduce women into the sect of the Cainites, who despised women, that one young woman named Quintillia proceeded to set up a heresy within the heresy, by preaching a Cainism for the use of women; this latter Cainism, less infectious than that of Sodom, came in direct line from Sappho, but figured also, undoubtedly, in the marvelous tales of the vision of St. Paul. It enjoyed, thanks to Quintillia, who may have been no more than a courtesan, a great vogue in Africa, where it took deep root, especially at Carthage.

The Adamites traced their doctrines back to the first man, in order

not to be outdone by the Cainites, but from this first man they did not separate the woman, as did the heirs of Cain and Sappho. The founder of their sect was a man named Prodicus, who had been a Carpocratian, but who did not approve the mystery which Carpocratus had imposed upon the operations of the flesh. According to him, that which was good in darkness, could not be an evil in the light of day. He had thus the audacity to permit and prescribe "public copulations between the sexes." It is thus that Bayle had translated this text of Theodoret: *prophanos largeuein* (*publice scortari*). St. Clement of Alexandria imputes the same infamies to the sect of Carpocratus, who, he remarks, must have framed his laws for the benefit of dogs, goats and swine. The initiation of the Adamites took place at one of those *agapai* at which the libidinous heretics found ample opportunity for the practice of their detestable mysteries. Prodicus altered somewhat the customs with regard to copulations, which took place at hazard and were repeated promiscuously in a profound darkness that made all ages and ranks equal. Theodoret (*Haeret.*, Book I. and V.) tells us that Prodicus, dissatisfied with this shady variety of orgy, invited the celebrants at the *agapai* to take the precaution of making appointments in advance, in such a manner that the right parties would be able to meet the moment the lights were extinguished. The conditions of the debauch were amicably discussed before the *agape* had brought the guests together around the Carpocratian board. Theodoret here relies upon the statement of St. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, Book III), who speaks of these immodest gatherings which were but an imitation of the convivial manners of pagan Rome. For Horace in one of his *Odes* (Book III., 6), mentions these adulteries which thus took place with the knowledge, and almost under the very eyes of the drunken husband, when the torches had been carried away, and the place had been given over to pleasure.

*Mox juniores quaerit adulteros  
Inter mariti vina; neque eligit  
Cui donet impermissa raptim  
Gaudia, luminibus remotis;  
Sed jussa coram non sine conscio  
Surgit marito; seu vocat institor,  
Seu navis Hispanae magister,  
Dedecorum pretiosus emptor.\**

\*Translator's Note:—The passage, a well known one, need not be rendered here.



We see from this quotation that the pagans, and Horace himself, were true Carpocratians without knowing it, while conversely, the Carpocratians were but poorly converted pagans. Prodicus, in order to motivate these monstrous excesses, pretended "that souls had been sent into bodies not to be punished but that, through all sorts of pleasure, they might render homage to the angels or to those genii who had created the world." He had endeavored, moreover, by an odious sacrilege, to depict the mystic union of brothers and sisters in Christ through the carnal conjunction of the man and woman. We ought to be grateful to him, however, for not having sanctified, like the Cainites, the morals of Sodom and for not having attempted to destroy humanity in the cradle.

However, after Prodicus, who lived about the year 120, the Adamites underwent a moral reform, the author of which is unknown; they vowed themselves to continence and to virginity, although they carried the imitation of their patron so far as to desire to return to the state of nudity characteristic of the first man. The Fathers do not give us a reason for this weird heresy, and so we are reduced to conjectures, which lead us to believe that the Adamites, in adopting this indecent costume for their ceremonies, if not for the public rites of the cult, were animated by the intention of recalling the innocence of man prior to Adam's sin. "They assemble," says St. Epiphany, "as nude as when they came out of their mother's bellies, and in this state, they conduct their readings, their prayers and their other religious exercises." St. Augustine merely repeats, almost textually, the words of St. Epiphany: "Thus, men and women, they assemble nude, they listen to readings, they pray and celebrate the sacraments all in a state of nudity (*nudi itaque mares feminaeque conveniunt, nudi lectiones audiunt, nudi orant, nudi celebrant sacramenta*)."

Despite this delicate test of their continence, the Adamites remained chaste, or at least, never went so far as to commit acts of the flesh, but they did not preserve the modesty of the eyes, and the spectacle of all these nudities defiled their thoughts by making it all the harder for them to resist the prickings of concupiscence. But St. Epiphany and St. Augustine state, expressly, that the Adamites did resist this constant provocation to lust, and that they ended by regarding themselves as lifeless beings. Nevertheless, St. Clement of Alexandria, who is obstinate about seeing imitators of Prodicus in those who inherited his heresy, accuses them always of copulating in the darkness, following their impure love feasts: *To kanaischyn-*

*non auton ten porniken tauten dikaiosunen ekpodon poiesamenous phos te toulychnon peritrope mignusthai.* We should not dare, in the presence of such contradictory opinions, to pronounce for or against the deeds of the Adamites; we feel, however, that these sectaries, who were merely Gnostics of a certain sort, must have conducted themselves in their nocturnal assemblages as shamefully as that nudity, which they paraded in honor of Adam and Eve, permitted.

This allegoric nudity even became, for certain Adamites of both sexes, a normal condition of the ascetic life. They remained nude, with a girdle which covered their loins, and would hide themselves, either in groups or one by one, in the middle of the woods and deserts; they would flee the approach of every human being who was distinguished from them by his clothing, and they liked to believe that they had returned to the first age of the world, when Man led the life of animals. This bestial manner of life must often have produced in these degraded beings, a complete forgetfulness of their sex and an absolute deadening of the senses. Also, when they occasionally returned to the society of their kind, without consenting to show themselves clad in public, they pretended that they no longer belonged to any sex and appeared to be insensible to the sight and touch of flesh. "They are men with the men," says St. Clement of Alexandria, "women with women; they desire to belong to both sexes." This complementary phrase implies, perhaps, something different from that which Evagrius discerned in reporting this singular fact (*Histor. eccles.*, Book I, Chapter 21). It must, as a matter of fact, be understood that satyrs of this sort gave themselves to all sorts of filthy impulses without distinction of sex or of person. It was thus, at least, that the Adamites came down to us across the centuries, up to the sixteenth century, when they make their last appearance, assuming that they are not to be recognized still in the Convulsionists\* of the eighteenth century.

These excesses, which the heresiarchs wrapped in the mantle of a new faith, led inevitably to a reaction in the form of excesses of continence and of asceticism. It was always Gnosticism which borrowed a Christian form and created a new and heretic communion. We see born, in succession, a number of Gnostic sects, the adherents of which condemned themselves to strange habits in the matter of chastity:

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. the American "Holy-Rollers," who, however, do not preach nudity.

some, in order to resemble Jesus Christ, who died a virgin; others, in order to approach as near as possible the state of Man in Paradise; the former with the object of slaying sin by not perpetuating humanity; the latter, by way of freeing themselves from the sway of the Devil, who was incarnate in woman. The Encratites, or the continent ones, the Marcionites and the Valentinians made their appearance at about the same time, in the middle of the second century, when they became known for their excessive chastity. The founder of the sect of the Marcionites, Marcion, son of a pious bishop of Sinope in Paphlagonia, had not been, at first, a very edifying model for this sort of continence, for he had begun his career as an heresiarch with an act of fornication, for which he was unable to win absolution from his father; he revenged himself for his excommunication by starting trouble among the orthodox. After having debauched a young girl, he bound himself, body and soul, to a woman who aided him in his heretical apostolate. He admitted only the states of celibacy and absolute continence as permissible among Christians, and he only baptised those, male or female, who made a vow to preserve their carnal and spiritual purity. He looked upon it as well, however, that the Sodomites had been delivered from Hell to the merits of the Redeemer, and he gave the assurance that, since their bodies were not to be resurrected, the stain they had suffered would not alter their souls, when the latter arrived before God, purified by death. The Marcionites did not avoid the society of women, since they believed that they had conquered the flesh. Women with them might administer baptism and say mass, provided they were pure of hand and soul. Marcion, in the manner of the principal Gnostics, recognized in nature the existence of two principles, the one good and the other bad, which were eternally at war with each other; he attributed to continence the power of combatting and vanquishing all the snares of the Devil, whose fortress was situated in the head of woman. This heresy, despite the privations which it imposed upon its followers, made so much progress throughout the empire, that Constantine the Great published an edict against the Marcionites in the year 326, while more than a century later, Theodoret, Bishop of Tyre, converted more than ten thousand in the course of his episcopacy.

Valentine, who lived at the same time as Marcion, was better versed than the latter in the abstractions of the Gnostic and Platonic philosophy, but like the latter, like many philosophers of Alexandria, he

judged it a useful thing to place man under the yoke of continence. His obscure religious theories only appealed to the highest aspirations of the spirit, which was endeavoring to rid itself of the useless weight of the body. The Valentinians, who carefully avoided incitations to lust, mortified the body in such a manner as to leave it no longer the free use of its faculties; they drank no wine, but fasted, slept little and that on the hard ground, avoided fixing their gaze on external objects, and endeavored only to lose themselves in the clouds of metaphysics. They were often accused of excesses which would have been beyond their physical strength, even if these excesses had not been contrary to the very essence of their doctrine. The Valentinians became almost ethereal beings, immaterial intelligences, in their constant commerce with the genii or the eons, which they conceived as intermediaries between Man and the Divinities. It is possible, however, that the mystic Prostitution of Incubi and Succubi, which frequently defiled the most chaste couch in the Middle Ages, was born quite naïvely out of this heresy of the Valentinians. The Encratites, or the continent ones, were not less severe than the Valentinians regarding sins of the flesh. They based their doctrine upon the Epistles of St. Paul, as explained by Tatian, the disciple of St. Justin. Tatian had made a dogma of the repugnances which St. Paul felt for the marriage state; he had condemned this sacrament as representing an odious union, and he prescribed celibacy as a path to the angelic life. This was merely the abuse of a lively and impatient faith, for Tatian proposed nothing less than to transport to the earth the perfections of the elect of Paradise. The sectaries who were the followers of this heresiarch carried even to the point of madness this passion for purity and continence; they held that they alone were pure and perfect among the Christians, and they made such a use of water, exteriorly and interiorly, as a symbol of ablution, that they were nicknamed *hydroparastates*.

The Valesians, who had merely a *vogue de curiosité* about the year 240, carried still further the cult of corporal purity, for their founder, the Arabian, Valesius, taking his inspiration from the sacrifice which Origen had made of his passion to the mortification of the flesh, succeeded in persuading himself that true chastity could only reside in a mutilated body. He declared that, in order to annihilate the sin of incontinence, one must destroy the cause, and he felt no regret at being separated from that perilous virility which had led him to sin



and to cause others to sin. His disciples failed to perceive that they were merely competing with the priests of Cybele; and not content with submitting to a castration which strongly resembled martyrdom, they devoted themselves with a sort of frenzy to the propagation of their cruel heresy; they never went out except armed with a small, sharp and pointed knife, like that with which surgeons cut off members or the testicles of slaves destined to the condition of a eunuch or the trade of the *spadones*; they were to be seen glancing furtively here and there as they sought a victim, without interrupting the thread of their mental prayers. They did not find many proselytes who would consent to become eunuchs, but they employed violence in order to conquer the body and bring it to a Valesian degree of chastity, and they mercilessly mutilated all the victims, Christian or pagan, who fell into their hands. It was principally in Judea that these mad heretics, who otherwise followed the doctrines of the Gnostics, thus attacked poor sinners under the pretext of making of them living angels.

But the Gnostics were not all of them radical enemies of the works of the flesh. Under the name of Manichaeans, on the contrary, they proclaimed, along with a hatred of marriage, the free and immoderate employment of all the sensual faculties. These Manichaeans, who almost equalled in number the true Christians of the fourth century, and who have surreptitiously come down to our own days, despite the harsh warfare which the Church has made on them, desired, if we are to believe the Fathers and the Councils, to erect a cult of the senses and to establish religious Prostitution in place of the Gospel and the rites of the spirit. The founder of this mysterious heresy was a Persian named Manes, who had set forth his strange doctrine in books from which his disciples drew their principles. It is hard to believe what St. Augustine tells us regarding their manner of looking upon souls separated from bodies. According to their system, God had constructed a great machine, composed of twelve aerial vessels, which were continually filled with souls, and which bore those souls across space to the moon and the sun; but this voyage took place under bizarre auspices. There were in these vessels divine virgins who took the masculine form in order to make love to women and the feminine form in order to excite the ardor of the man; in such a manner that the souls of the two sexes did not cease to find purification in the course of this cosmic coitus; for, said the Manichaeans, during the

emotion produced by lust, light is disengaged from dark and material substances, and leaps toward Divinity (*ut per hanc illecebram, commota eorum concupiscentia fugiat de illis lumen, quod membris suis permixtum tenebant*). If the Manichaeans had transferred prostitution to the celestial spheres, they still had no desire to abolish it upon the earth, for they looked upon the venereal act as a holy work, provided the holiness of this act was not compromised by marriage or by conception. *Et si utuntur conjugibus*, says St. Augustine (*de Haeresibus*, Chapter 46), *conceptum tamen generationemque devitant, ne divina substantia quae in eos per alimenta ingreditur vinculis carnis ligetur in prole*. It was an incredible perversion of the imagination to see in the generation of children a diminution of the divine substance which each took into himself through the process of nutrition. With ideas so monstrous as these, the Manichaeans were convicted in advance of all the debaucheries which were attributed to them, and they were persecuted by the Christians, just as the Christians had been by the pagans. "Since they believe that the spirit comes from the good principle," says Maimbourg, in his *Histoire de Saint Léon*, "and that the flesh and the body are of evil origin, they teach that one must hate the latter, do shame to it and dishonor it in all possible ways, and in accordance with this infamous precept, there is no sort of execrable practice with which they do not defile themselves in their assemblages." This however, is not a reason for crediting them with the horrible and disgusting practices of which St. Augustine accuses them, when he asserts that they were in the habit of mingling with their hosts and their daily food human semen: "*Qua occasione vel potius execrabilis superstitionis quandam necessitate coguntur electi eorum, velut eucharistiam conspersam cum semine humano sumere, ut etiam inde, sicut de aliis libis quos accipiunt, substantia illa divina purgetur . . . Ac per hoc sequitur eos, ut sic eam et de semine humano, quam admodum de aliis seminibus, quae in alimentis sumunt, debeant manducando purgare.*"\* Is it not evident that Prostitution was everywhere that the Christianity of the Gospel was not?

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. the Black Mass.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

CHRISTIANITY, while engaged in a struggle with pagan Prostitution, found in its own bosom, unworthy adversaries who disgraced it with the most abominable excesses. These adversaries came sometimes from those profane religions which the faith of Christ was sapping in their obscene roots, roots bound up with the shameful passions of man, who had created his gods in his own image. Sometimes, too, the most redoubtable heresiarchs were but ignorant catechumens or well-intentioned deacons, exalted and blinded by austerity, prayer and solitude. In this manner, excessive continence might lead to excessive impurity; that was how the Christians, for a long time chaste and virtuous, came to permit themselves to fall into criminal aberrations, which the Gentiles themselves would not have permitted. The principles of chastity, of soul and body, was the greatest force behind this new law, which made, thereby, submissive slaves in making proselytes. The Doctors and the Fathers of the Church did not cease, therefore, to pursue and overthrow paganism under the forms of Sacred and Legal Prostitution. But, strange thing! while nascent Christianity was conducting this indefatigable warfare upon iniquitous doctrines and practices, it did not perceive that Sacred Prostitution, and even Guest Prostitution, those two sisters as old as the world, had already dared to reappear under a Christian disguise, which completely altered their character and concealed their primitive origin. Thanks to this disguise, under which they were no longer recognizable, although they revealed themselves clearly enough by their acts, they had come to occupy a parasitic place which heresy had conquered for them, and from which religious morality was unable to dislodge them until a good while later, by purifying everything which bore a trace of their passage.

It was in the ascetic life of hermits, virgins and the first monks that guest Prostitution, that naïve manifestation of Sacred Prostitution, appears, if not to have been reborn, at least to have endeavored to prove that it could exist under such circumstances. Solitaries of one and the other sex had broken violently with the world and had retired along the Jordan and into the desert of the Thebaid in order to live there a continent and a penitent life, far from sin, that devour-

ing lion which they feared a hundred times more than the lions of these vast solitudes. It took years of this laborious and savage existence for the demon of the flesh to be conquered, for his ardors to be extinguished, and for the spirit to become definitely master of the body. During these years of struggle and temptation, in which the revolt of the senses frequently threatened to break all the bonds of continence, the soul knew hours of doubt and weakness, intervals of vertigo and madness. Then, voluptuous hallucinations would assail these poor victims of the Tempter; the holy man or the holy woman was no longer conscious of his individuality or of his state. The bare and narrow cell, the cold and somber cavern, the wretched hut, open to the inclemencies of the weather, would be transformed, in the occupant's dreams, into a palace bathed in perfumes, gleaming with silken stuffs, and filled with music and with song, laden with vases of gold and silver, with tapestries and cushions, and with tables groaning with exquisite food and delicious wines. Ordinarily, prayer would triumph over these hellish snares, and the breath of God would dissipate the fascinating cloud; but at these difficult moments, in those nights of burning insomnia, in those days marked by an involuntary return to the things of the earth, if, all of a sudden, a wandering traveler happened to penetrate the asylum of the despairing virgin, if a Christian woman, eager for the consolations of the word of God, happened suddenly to appear before the eyes of a delirious patriarch, the patriarch or virgin might readily believe that they were once more in ancient Biblical times, and so bow before the divine guest whom Heaven had sent them. The Devil aiding the work, Guest Prostitution would resume its sway and leave behind it, in tears and repentance, the fragile virgin whom it had deceived with illusions and the vanities of the human heart.

In reading the lives of the Fathers of the desert, we see, on every page, how great was the power of the flesh over these energetic natures, exhausted by fastings, macerations and physical sufferings, but exalted also by a terror of sin and an impatience of spiritual perfection. "Alas, my God!" cries St. Jerome, the model of anchorites, "how many times, when I was in that frightful solitude, all scorched by the heat of the sun, did I believe that I was still living amid the delights and pleasures of Rome! My languishing members were horrified at beholding the sackcloth with which they were covered. My skin was as black as that of an Ethiopian. I did nothing but weep and groan.



I could not sleep, and if sleep sometimes overcame me and closed my eyes in spite of myself, in spite of all my resistance, I would hurl myself upon the earth, naked, to break my bones rather than to find rest for them. I do not speak of food, since solitaries, however exhausted they may be, never drink anything but cold water, and since it would be a species of excess to eat any sort of cooked food. As for me, who found myself in this state, and who had condemned myself to this voluntary pain from the fear I had of Hell; I, who had for companions only scorpions and wild beasts, I imagined, nevertheless, sometimes, that I was in the company of young girls! My face was all pale from fasting; my body was all cold and withered; and yet, I felt those impure waves of warmth, the reviving fires of concupiscence, even in a body that was half dead. How many times have I prostrated myself at the feet of the Son of God, to bathe those feet with my tears and dry them with my hair! How many times have I passed whole weeks in subduing my rebellious flesh! How many times have I spent entire days and nights, crying aloud continually and never ceasing to beat my breast, until peace had been given me! I conceived a horror of my cell, as though it knew all my impure thoughts, and I would go, irritated with myself, to hurl myself into the wildest portion of the desert, there to lose myself. If I descried some horrible rock, some somber cavern, some ragged mountain-top, that was the place I chose in which to offer my prayers to God and overcome my sighs. Finally, God, who heard my sighs and beheld my tears, after perceiving that my eyes had been for so long a time fixed upon him, would put me into such a state of mind that it seemed to me, all of a sudden, I was in the company of angels, and in these transports of joy I would cry out: 'I will run after you, to follow the scent of your perfumes!' "

This passage, a parallel for which might be found in the confessions of any Father of the desert, is sufficient to acquaint us with those diabolic temptations that beset these holy persons. There is, here, sufficient explanation of the provocative influence which the sight of a person of another sex must have had upon a mind tortured with concupiscence, upon a body irritated with privations. We have already seen the Abbot Zosimus, pursuing, in the sands of Egypt, a creature wholly nude, with a body burned and blackened by the sun, who was none other than the famous sinner known as Mary the Egyptian. There were, in Africa and Asia Minor, a multitude of girl and women hermits, who devoted themselves to the monastic

life, and who did not escape without a combat the terrible emotions of the flesh; this it was that caused St. Jerome, a witness, judge and party to these overmastering temptations, to say: "I place virginity in Heaven, and do not boast of possessing it." The lives of the Fathers, collected and written by him, is full of singular tales which show us solitaries of both sexes in constant communication with beings who come to them from Heaven or from Hell, to tempt them or to encourage them. One might, thus, suppose, without desiring to question the religious and touching character of these extraordinary narratives, that the propinquity of the two sexes in these solitudes, peopled only with penitents' cells, must have engendered many abuses from the point of view of morals, not to take account of those fiery passions which isolation, silence, fastings and insomnia would develop in an ardent and fanatic soul. The subjugation of the senses was, frequently, a task beyond human strength, and the Devil, to whom was attributed these outbursts of lust, would come to aid all the torments of soul and all the rebellions of the body.

St. Arsenius, who lived wholly nude in the desert, and who fed on herbs like the beasts, fleeing the approach of his fellow men, found, one day, at the door of his cell, a woman aged and of noble birth, who had been led to him through devotion. "If you desire to see my face," he said to her indignantly, "look!" But she did not dare look, and remained prostrate before the solitary. "You shall return to Rome," he added sorrowfully, "and you shall say to the other women that you have seen the Abbot Arsenius, and they also shall come to see me!" "By the grace of God," she replied, saddened by the Saint's sorrow, "I shall not suffer any woman to come here!" . . . "I pray God to efface your memory from my heart!" murmured the poor Abbot. This lady returned from her visit to the desert with a feverish and profound bitterness; she wished to die. "Do you not know," said an archbishop, who brought her consolation, "do you not know that you are a woman, and that the Devil employs women in attacking solitaries? That is why Arsenius spoke to you as he did; but he still prays unceasingly for your soul." And the lady consented to live. The writer who reports this melancholy legend adds a number of other examples which give proof of human fragility among the venerable Confessors. A young solitary said to a patriarch, whose disciple he was: "You are old; shall we go back to the world a little while?" . . . "Go where there are no women!" responded the old man. . . .

"That can only be in the desert," replied the young man, who had not yet been exposed to meeting women. . . . "Lead me then to the desert!" Another Father, in carrying his own mother across a river, covered his hands with his cloak. "Why do you cover your hands thus, my son?" the good woman asked him. . . . "The body of a woman is fire!" he replied, chasing the Devil away with the sign of the Cross. "When I touch you, my mother, the memory of other women awakens in my heart!"

The villainous rôle which the Devil played in causing saints to sin from desire of the flesh is clearly established in the popular legend of St. Barlaam and the King Jehoshaphat, a legend which has frequently inspired romantic epics in all languages during the Middle Ages. Barlaam converted Jehoshaphat, son of an idolatrous King, to whom the legend gives a name undoubtedly allegoric: King Future. This King was desolated at seeing his son become a Christian, and endeavored to lead him back to the religion of the false gods. The magician Theodas counselled the King to remove his son from all contact with men, and to have him served only by beautiful women, seductive and well adorned. "I will send to him one of the spirits which I have under my orders, in order to lead him into lust," said the magician, "for nothing is more suited than the face of women to seducing young people." In accordance with this perverse advice, the young Christian was locked up in the midst of a seraglio of young women, who incessantly tempted him to sin, and the evil spirit sent by the magician laid hold of Jehoshaphat with such power that the latter would have succumbed, if the God of the Christians had not come to his aid. As it was, he resisted, and submitted his body to the rule of the soul. They brought to him, then, a daughter of the King who was perfect in her beauty, but who produced upon him more effect than all the other women; he endeavored to convert her, even while he was admiring her enchanting beauty. "If you want me to renounce my idols, marry me!" said this siren. "Christians have no aversion to marriage; on the contrary they praise it; for the patriarchs, the prophets and St. Peter, the prince of apostles, all were married." . . . "It is vain for you to persecute me," he replied, turning away. "It is permitted to Christians to marry, but it is not permitted to those who have made a vow of virginity." She pretended to weep, and he looked at her tenderly. "If you wish to be an agent of my salvation," she murmured in a trembling voice, "give me one request, which is little

enough: sleep with me this night, and I promise you that at daybreak I shall become a Christian." Jehoshaphat was not prepared for this strange proposition; he knew what a joy the conversion of an idolater was to the angels; he knew, too, how the angels grieve for the sin of lust; nevertheless, he wavered and sought in the glances of the seductive one the shameful courage to sin. Then the Evil Spirit, whose mission it was to make him sin, said to his infernal companions: "See this young girl breaks down the virtue of this young man whom we have not been able to vanquish. Come, then, let us hurl ourselves upon him, for the moment is opportune." Jehoshaphat, the result was, felt himself swept by the fires of concupiscence, while the Devil was suggesting to him the detestable thought that he ought to save, at the price of his own soul, the soul of this pretty pagan. But before consenting to what had been demanded of his Christian charity, he made the sign of the Cross and began to pray. At once he fell asleep and was transported, in a dream, to the domain of the blessed. Upon awakening, according to the words of the naïve compiler of the Golden Legend, who has not followed the narrative of John of Damascus: "The beauty of this girl and her companions inspired in him no longer anything more than that disgust which one feels at sight of the filthiest ordure."

The Fathers of the Church believed in the existence of a demon who presided especially over lust, and whose function it was to excite carnal concupiscence, among idolators or Christian men. This demon is to be found on every page in the lives of the Fathers and in the legends of the saints; he assumes the most attractive forms in order to tempt to evil Virgins and Confessors; he is often repelled and put to flight, but sometimes, he gains his ends, and he invents the most singular knaveries in order to get around the continence of an anchorite. It would be difficult to say whether this demon of lust and desire was the same as that of prostitution, which we meet with under this name (*demon scortationis*) in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius (Chapter 26), but which does nothing there to justify its name. A certain aged hermit had spent many years in evading the snares of this demon, who besieged him in a myriad ways, with an indefatigable ardor. This hermit had his cell on the side of the Mount of Olives, where the Spirit of God is always present. "When will you leave me in peace?" said the pious solitary one day. "Leave me, for you are as old as I am." The demon then appeared to him and promised not



to torment him any more, providing the holy man would swear not to reveal to anyone in the world what the demon should confide to him. The hermit was willing to purchase repose at this price, and gave the oath which his tempter demanded; but then the tempter said to him, maliciously: "I advise you not to adore any longer that image which represents a woman holding a child in her arms." The demon retired and the old man remained, greatly worried over such a piece of advice, which his vow prevented him from revealing, even to his confessor. Profoundly troubled in his conscience, he took his way to a neighboring city named Pharaon, and went to confession to the Abbot Theodorus, who absolved him of his perjury: "Only hasten to leave this city, which is but one great lupanar," the Abbot said to him, "for you shall not be the stronger against the demon of prostitution, but worship as you go Jesus Christ and his divine Mother." The old man, returning to his cell, found there the demon, who accused him of having perjured himself. "Away from me!" cried the Saint, pursuing the demon with great signs of the Cross, "I am too old to listen to you or to be afraid of you!"

The Cenobitic life was, thus, besieged by sensual desires and worldly thoughts; the victory of the Tempter frequently depended only upon his perseverance in laying snares for the solitaries; for the occasions of sin recurred only too frequently. Guest Prostitution spoke in a louder voice than the other teachings of the Church; it not merely had found its way, with the heretics, into the nocturnal feasts, and found a place in the visitations of virgins and Christian widows; it also stalked mysteriously across those solitudes where the brothers and sisters of the new Catholic family met to pray and work in common. Ignorance and credulity prepared the victims who were devoured by the monster of uncleanness. It was the heresies that brought in their wake this deep-going relaxation of Christian morals, from the year 230 on. "There was no longer any charity in the lives of Christians," St. Cyprian, an eye-witness of this sorrowful period tells us, "there was no longer any discipline in their manners; the men combed their beards, the woman rouged their faces; the purity of the eyes was violated through the corruption of the work of God's hands, and even the hair was given an unnatural hue. Subtleties and artifices were employed to deceive the simple; Christians surprised their brothers in Christ by their infidelities and knaveries. They married with infidels and prostituted to pagans the members

in Jesus Christ." This passage and many others bear witness to the persistence of Guest Prostitution in the lives of Christians of one and the other sex, despite the excommunications of councils and the admonitions of the Doctors.

These evil manners, which were prevalent in so many communities of women, must be attributed to the demoralizing influence of wandering and secular monks, whose numbers debauchery and idleness had increased. These heretics lived joyously in the world, without a fixed residence, without fixed occupation, without the means of existence; they were divided into a host of sects, which were indistinguishable from one another except by their different varieties of debauchery. They all led the same sort of idle and vagabond life, going from city to city, or rather from convent to convent; for before the regular institution of monastic orders, virgins, vowed and consecrated, lived together in retreat and prayer, fleeing the contact and the sight of pagans, but consorting willingly with priests and the faithful. Among these sects of sluggards and debauchees, that of the Sarabaïtes was to be remarked; they are called *remoboth* by St. Jerome and *gyrovagi* by the historians of the fifth century. The Sarabaïtes, whose name in the Egyptian language signifies *the undisciplined*, traced their origin to the Jew Ananias, whom St. Peter had punished for his lie by striking him with sudden death, along with his wife Sapphira. Although so-called Christians, they did not renounce circumcision, which favored their impure habits. "Everything with them breathes of affectation," wrote St. Jerome (who was not careful to distinguish them from the cenobites and the anchorites) to Eustochia, in the year 384, "they have sleeves and large shoes, and a garment that is still larger; they give great sighs, are very exact in visiting virgins, tear to shreds the reputation of the clergy and, on feast days, give themselves to the most unbridled and intemperate excesses (*saturantur ad vomitum*).” In the beginning, they formed fraternal associations, by twos and threes, and demanded in return for the labor of their hands only a common and frugal nourishment; but they had frequent disputes, which, according to St. Jerome, came from the fact that, living by their labors, they were unable to bear a master; but the cause of these altercations, which often had a serious result, was, rather, their jealousies and their amorous rivalries. They were not slow in breaking up and in seeking each his own fortune. Cassian, in his *Commentaries* (*Collat.*, XVIII, 8), gives us a most hideous pic-

ture of the impudent conduct of these dissolute monks, who continued to multiply in Egypt and in the wilds of the Theban desert, and who had not yet disappeared in the ninth century, since we see Charlemagne passing a law to wipe them out (*Capitul. reg. Francor.*, Volume I, Page 370). We are by no means inclined to defend and justify the Sarabaïtes, as the scholar, Franz Walch, does in his *Memoirs of the Academy of Göttingen* (Volume VI, 1775)). Walch endeavors to distinguish from them the *gyrovagi*, by attributing to these latter all the excesses which were imputed to the Sarabaïtes. Cassian, whom we prefer to follow in this matter, had seen them at work in upper Egypt, where the city of Oxprhynchus alone contained more than ten thousand virgins, and where the entire population was composed of cenobites and monks. Four centuries later, when the religious orders were scattered throughout the Christian world, and when the monastic rule was closing the doors of cloisters to the dangers of Guest Prostitution, St. Benedict recommended to his disciples that they defy these corrupters: "There is a third and very evil class of monks; it is that of the Sarabaïtes, who, adhering to no rules and deaf to the councils of experience, preserve, always, the tastes of the world, daring even to lie to God and to usurp the sacred orders. Gathered together by twos and threes, sometimes alone, they live without a pastor, shut up, not in the sheepfold of the Lord, but in their own pen. Their desire is their law; they call holy whatever is of their choice; that which they do not love they look upon as forbidden." The rule of St. Benedict also speaks of the *gyrovagi*, who had neither home nor fireside, and who went seeking adventure, eating, drinking and lodging in the convents, where they left behind them only too many memories of their intemperance, their irreligion and their impurity (*per diversarum cellas hospitantur, semper vagi et nunquam stabiles et propriis voluptatibus et gulæ illecebris servientes*).

In order to seek out and discover the final traces of Guest Prostitution, we must go back into monastic history and take account of the numerous fallings by the way which go to prove the fragility of human virtue and the impotence of the most sacred vow. We shall see how, in the convents of women, the reception of dignitaries of the Church and the hospitality accorded to passing monks sometimes brought disorders which did not always become scandals, being veiled in the silence of the religious life. The Church, like an indulgent mother, smothered under her mantle these infractions of her rule

and these outbursts of her young flock. Her eyes, however, were fully open to excesses vainly hidden in the shadow of these asylums of penitence. It is less from the Acts of the councils and the monastic chronicles than from tradition, which relies on the testimony of tales and popular poems; it is less from the numerous and singular facts than from the vague murmurs of echoes of the past that it would be possible to depict the loose manners of certain of the abbeys, where the arrival of a pilgrim or a monk evoked joyous reminiscences of the heresy of the Sarabaïtes. Those who, so to speak, had had their eyes and ears about them would relate the scandalous legend and tell marvels of the hospitality of the convent. The *fabliau* of the Count Ory, which is to be found under different names in almost all the literatures of the middle ages, is a gracious indiscretion, which teaches us much more regarding this hospitality than do the authentic and reformatory acts of many convents of women, into which disorder has been introduced by these amiable and audacious guests. We do not think it necessary to stress further this delicate subject of the relaxation of cloistral manners and the dangers of monastic hospitality.

As to Sacred Prostitution, which was the exclusive property of the idolatrous religions, and which had left upon the latter its allegorical stains, we are astonished and indignant to find it attempting to revive itself, or at least to keep itself from dying out entirely, in the midst of a religion founded on the purest morality and filled with the noblest aspirations of the soul. It may be explained, moreover, that the adoration of images had preserved, here and there, a few traces of this form of Prostitution; the Church had succeeded the temple. The chaste statue of the Savior, of the Virgin and of the saints replaced the brazen statues of Bacchus, of Venus, and Hercules and of Priapus; but the people found difficulty in changing, at once, their gods and their religion; and so, they preserved the ancient cult in so far as it could be mingled, grossly, with the worship of the true God. The priests, for their part, were not scrupulous about appropriating certain forms of religious ceremonial, which they proceeded to reclothe with a Christian signification; they did not restrain the intrusion of certain practices essentially idolatrous and even outrageous to the new faith. Among the first founders of cults, there were undoubtedly perverse or corrupt spirits who played upon the simplicity of neophytes. Thus, in this age of ecclesiastical foundations, we see heresy



making use of all the results of Christianity, and even daring to plant in the religion the roots of sacred Prostitution: now it was dances and music, those insidious auxiliaries to pleasure; now it was the *agapai*, where the obscenities of the Bacchanalia soon came to be reflected; again, it was saints disguised as divinities whose attributes they bore; yet again, the sacraments themselves were not exempt from these shameful imitations. At baptism, as St. John Chrysostom wrote to Pope Innocent I., the women were nude, not being permitted to veil their sex; at the mass, the assistants kissed each other on the lips; in the processions, veiled virgins bore amulets and idols which would have befitted the cult of Isis or of Mithra; the obscene cakes of the pagan festivals, the *coliphia* and the *siligines*, had scarcely been modified in their forms and uses. In a word, Sacred Prostitution was sinking root everywhere, like a parasitic ivy, fastening, not upon dogma, but upon liturgy. It was necessary for the Fathers of the Church and the councils to lead souls and hearts, by degrees, to undergo the divine yoke of Evangelic morality.

But if this Catholic cult tore up and cast out the pagan tares which had germinated in its bosom, Paganism was still perpetuated in certain beliefs, in certain ceremonies, which surrounded the old stump of pagan Prostitution. It was in this manner that the secret cult of the domestic gods found a stronghold in the *lararium*, as in a fort, and there remained inviolate for centuries after the establishment of Christianity. That was how Venus, Priapus, the god Termes, the Fauns and the wood gods came to have altars and sacrifices down even to the middle ages. Lovers and virgins were the last worshipers of a religion which deified the senses and the passions; but they were no longer the timid worshipers of an idol which they incensed at the foot of a secular tree, on the edge of a fountain, in the depths of a grotto, on the top of a mountain; they now claimed, in an imperious tone, and sometimes with threats, the aid and protection of those overthrown gods whom hope still permitted to remain upon their pedestals, and who crumbled to pieces at the first test of their impotence. Girls who wished to have lovers or husbands vowed their virginity to the genius of a river, of a forest, of a tree or of a stone, but they did not offer to these genii the physical tribute of their virginity, which instead, was sacrificed on a flowering lawn, when a shepherd as beautiful as Daphnis happened to be present to immolate the victim. It is always Venus who is the soul of the universe, it

is Venus who preserves her eternal cult in the presence of nature.

The new converts did not readily part from the divinities in whose presence they felt young and full of ardor; they were baptized, they went to church, they participated in the love-feasts, they felt, with a gentle emotion, the waves of Evangelic morality flowing over their souls, but they still were attached by some sensual bond, by some physical instinct, to the apotheosized images of their own passions, to the divine analogies of their own bodies. Venus had been the first personification of this idolatry, under the names of Mylitta, of Urania, and of Astarte; she was, also, the last, under her own name of Venus, which the gross rustics pronounced as *Benus*. There has been discovered, at Pompeii, a curious inscription which shows us clearly enough that, from the middle of the first century after Christ, the cult of Venus was the object of sacrilege. It was an unhappy lover who desired to revenge the pain of his own heart upon the goddess of love herself: "Let him come here, he who loves! I want to break the ribs of Venus and shatter her loins with the blows of a stick. She has broken my heart, the cruel goddess; why should not I, in revenge, break her head?"

*Quisquis amat, veniat! Benere, volo frangere costas  
Fustibus et lumbos debilitare deae.  
Si potest illa mihi tenerum pertundere pectus,  
Quin ergo non possim caput deae frangere?*

This idolatry crept into the rites paid to various saints, who had been chosen by popular caprice to replace the familiar gods, invoked under the every-day circumstances of life. We have no desire, despite the rights of scholarship, to expand upon a theme which casts a blemish and a reflection upon the most respectable things; but it is impossible not to recognize the fact that Sacred Prostitution had taken refuge under the auspices of these saints, whom the people had created in the image of various false gods, and whom all the efforts of the Church could not succeed in casting into public disrepute until the people had learned to blush for their ignoble superstition. Such were those apocryphal saints who possessed the happy privilege of curing sterility in women and impotence in men. We cannot doubt that these saints came in direct line from Priapus and his immodest assistants, the gods Termes, Mutinus, Tychon, etc. The

ecclesiastical authority never extended its protection to such saints as these, who were left, as fetishes, to the worship of the vulgar, and who only exercised their regenerating influence within a very limited field, with those poor folk, credulous and trusting, who had been convinced by immemorial tradition of the merits of these strange patrons. The majority of them were but Priapi in disguise, and archaeology has shown that, in all the places where this indecent cult was established, there had been previously, a temple or a statue to, or emblem of, Priapus.

We shall not here speak of all those saints whom sterile women, impotent husbands, and the victims of evil spells still invoked. Calvin has denounced them to the eyes of public decency in his famous *Treatise on Relics*; Henri Estienne, in his *Apologie pour Herodote*, has placed them upon the index, and long before these satirical protests, religion had condemned as superstitious and scandalous the worship of such obscenities. There is no need, therefore, for us to state that Paganism in its filthiest forms had been perpetuated in the special cults established in various places to the Saints Paterne, René, Prix, Gilles, Renaud, Guignolet, etc. But this last, more celebrated than the others, must occupy our attention a little more closely, since he inherited all the attributes of Priapus, and since he was, in France, down to the Revolution of 1789, the last symbol of Sacred Prostitution.

"At the bottom of the port of Brest," Harmand de la Meuse tells us, in his *Anecdotes Relatives à la Révolution*, "beyond the fortifications as you come up the river, there was a chapel near a fountain and a small wood which covered the hill, and in this chapel was a stone statue honored with the name of a saint. If decency permitted a description of Priapus with his indecent attributes, I should be able to describe this statue. When I saw it, the chapel was half demolished and without a roof, the statue lying on the earth outside, not broken but undergoing certain repairs which impressed one as being even more scandalous; sterile women, or those who feared being so, would go to this statue and, after having scratched or scraped that which I do not dare to name, and after having drunk a powder in the water of the fountain, would leave in the hope of being fertile." We have, here, the cult of Priapus in full sway, at the time of the Revolution, in the most religious province of France.

And yet, the legend of St. Guignolet has no analogy with the

fable of Priapus in the Hellenic mythology. This saint, named Winvaloeus, which is translated by *Guignolet*, *Guenolé*, *Guingulois* and *Wignevalay*, was the first Abbot of Landevenec in the middle of the fifth century, and lived in austerity, without ever having any communication with women. His legend, nevertheless, impresses us as being full of erotic symbolism, and a number of his miracles indicate a special characteristic of which his relics and his statues have preserved a trace for more than thirteen centuries. We shall find the key to his cult at Brest by establishing the etymology of the name of the Abbey of Landevenec, situated at three leagues from this city: *Landevenec* is, clearly, *Landa Veneris*, and it is certain that this land or plain, bordering the sea, possessed at a remote period a temple, or *fanum* of Venus, very renowned, especially with Breton sailors, who upon returning from their voyages, did not fail to go to sacrifice to the goddess and to commend to her the fertility of their wives. At Landevenec, as in all the places devoted to the cult of Venus, Christianity purified the pagan temple and sanctified the idol; but popular obstinacy attributed to the saint the qualities of the false god, and Guignolet was merely a continuation of Priapus. The relics of this Breton saint were honored elsewhere, notably at the Abbey of Blandenberg, near Gand, and at Montreuil in Picardy. The name of the city of Montreuil probably goes back to the religion of Guignolet and to the symbols of Priapus. According to the legend, a goose had swallowed the eye of Guignolet's sister; the latter opened the belly of the goose, took out the eye and put it back in its place intact. Now the mystic meaning of the eye in the religions of antiquity is well known, especially in the cult of Isis, in which it was mingled with the symbols of Venus; as to the goose, it was the symbolic bird of Priapus. Cambry relates the miracle in his *Voyage au Finistère*, but he does not look for its primitive sense and he does not appear to question what the eye of Isis and the goose of Priapus might have in common. The statue of St. Guignolet at Montreuil was still more indecent than that which the mariners worshiped at Brest. Dulaure, whose evidence, it is true, is not very reliable on questions of this sort, had viewed this statue, which was still venerated in 1789, and does not hesitate to describe it in his *Description des Principaux Lieux de la France*. It was of stone and represented the saint, entirely naked, lying upon his back, with a monstrous phallus. This phallus had been worn away by the devotion of the women, who had diminished



its proportions by scraping it so much. We look upon this detail as a pleasantry in none too good taste on Dulaure's part; for he never overlooks an occasion to ridicule superstitious practices.

St. Guignolet, as we have said, was not the only saint who had preserved something of the physiognomy and character of Priapus. Brittany, in particular, paid special devotion to this family of saints; she possessed a Saint Paterne, or Paternal, who was invoked at Vannes, and who was concerned with the mysteries of paternity. Henri Estienne has collected the hagiography of the other successors of Priapus, upon whom the ithyphallic inscriptions bestow the epithets of *paternus* and of *pantheus*. "As to the evil of sterility (in the face of which physicians so often found themselves hopeless)," says the author of the *Apologie pour Herodote*, "there are many saints who cure it and who give children to women, merely as a result of devotion. In the first place, there is St. Guerlichon, who has an abbey in the city of Bourg-le-Dieu and who draws his worshipers from Romorantin and many other places; he boasts of rendering pregnant as many women as come to him, providing that, during the period of their pregnancy they do not fail in their devotion to the blessed idol which lies flat upon its back instead of standing upright like the others. In addition to this, it is required that every day they drink a certain beverage mingled with a powder shaved from those parts of the idol which it is most indecent to name." Henri Estienne, who is rightly indignant at finding so shameful a devotion practiced by Christians, adds that those parts of the statue which it was the custom to shave had been well worn away at the time this image was examined by an individual deserving of credence, an individual whom he does not name, but who certified to him the authenticity of the fact, about the year 1550.

"There is also," he adds, "in the land of Constantine in Normandy (which is commonly called Constantine), a St. Gilles, who has enjoyed no less credit in these affairs, however old and decrepit he may be, according to the proverb common among those who take an interest in such abuses, who traffick in them, and who believe that only old saints can work miracles. I have also heard tell of a certain St. René in Anjou, who mixes in this business; but as to how the women deport themselves in his presence (he showing them what modesty commands should be hidden), I should have as much shame in reporting as my readers would in perusing what I might have to

say." There can be no doubt that the purpose of these stone saints was the same as that of the idol of Mutinus (see Chapter XIV), their images representing a deity whom we shall find in the religions of India, as whom we have already found in those of Phoenicia and Egypt. It would be easy, by means of etymology, to associate St. Gilles and St. Guerlichon with Priapus and the latter's auxiliaries. As to René, or Renaud, there is an allusion here to *reins*, *rena*, and a poet of the sixteenth century has this etymology in view, when, in the following bantering verse, he invokes.

*Et saint Renaud pour les rognons.\**

We may also trace back to Priapus the genealogy of St. Prix, in Latin *Projectus*, which was translated into the vulgar tongue as *Prey* and *Priet*. It would be easy to recognize Priapus in *Projectus*, written *Proiectus*. This St. Project was a bishop of Clermont in Auvergne, who suffered martyrdom in the seventh century; his relics were very widely scattered, as well as his images, and sterile women paid to him a scandalous cult, for which the good bishop was not responsible. The Acts of the saint are printed in the collection of the Bollandists; but it is to be understood that one will not find there anything to justify the indecencies of this popular superstition; this superstition, moreover, only existed in a small number of country chapels, although more than four hundred churches honored St. Project or St. Prix with considerable ceremony. In the village of Cormeil, near Paris, there was to be seen, for a long time, an image of St. Prix, which may have been originally a statue of Priapus, and which, in any case, had been fashioned after the model of the pagan god. It is easy to understand how, in the beginning, the statues merely changed names as the temples became churches. Finally, the scholar, Le Duchat, in his remarks on the *Apologie pour Herodote*, adds to our catalogue of ithyphallic saints a St. Arnaud, adored at Saint-Auban (we are unable to say in what province this region was located): "The statue of St. Arnaud bore an apron which hid its genital parts. Sterile women supposed that, on account of some resemblance in name, St. Arnaud must possess the same virtue as St. Renaud of the Burgundians; and so, they would raise the apron of this statue, as though the mere inspection of such an object must render them

\**Translator's Note*:—"And Saint Renaud for the kidneys."

fecund." We shall find, perhaps, in the ancient cult of Priapus or of Horus, some analogous usage, which had become imbedded in the beliefs of the people, and which had persisted, from century to century, as an aid to sterile unions.

A whole book might be written on the vestiges of paganism in the Christian religion; there might be, above all, a curious study of Sacred Prostitution through its various religious and liturgical metamorphoses; we shall content ourselves with calling the attention of archeologists and scholars to this subject, as new as it is strange; they will find in the Fathers of the Church, notably in Lactantius and in St. Augustine, a host of details relative to the tenacity of pagan Prostitution, despite the preaching of the Gospel. The Emperor Constantine did well in destroying, from top to bottom, the temples of Venus at Heliopolis and elsewhere; but he did not thereby turn aside the stream of pilgrims who thronged to these places, consecrated for so many centuries to the generative goddess; and the Christian basilicas which he caused to be erected upon the very sites of these temples retained, so to speak, the brand of the ancient cult. For he was obliged to forbid, by written law (*rursus scriptas misit institutiones*, we read in the life of this Emperor by Eusebius) the prostitution of virgins and married women at Heliopolis in Phoenicia, while his decrees proved unavailing against the primitive form of the cult of Astarte. This sacred Prostitution remained, in a manner, connected with the places which had given it birth and with the debris of the temples which had witnessed its growth. The Christian emperors had need of all the authority they possessed in order to stifle the public worship of the divinities of paganism; but in casting the temples into ruins, in overthrowing the statues, and in persecuting the pagan priests, they were unable to attain the deep roots which this cult had left in public opinion and in morals and manners. The peoples of the fields, grosser than those of the cities, but also more faithful to the teachings of their ancestors, took under their protection the gods whom they loved, and whom the moral symbolism of Catholic morality was powerless to replace; they protected the chapels, the rustic altars and the images of these gods in the dense forests, in the deserts, on the mountain-tops and beside springs; then, finally, yielding to the excommunication of councils and the policing of the bishops, they renounced these images, these altars and these *aediculi*, the ruins of which, however, they always respected, while it was with a

sentiment wholly pagan that they gave themselves to the adoration of the saints, whom they reinvested with the privileges of their abolished gods. That is how it was that Venus, Flora, Bacchus, Isis, Priapus and the other divinities, representative of nature and the generative principle, came to have faithful followers, and what almost amounted to temples, even down to our day.



## CHAPTER XXXV

WE HAVE seen what the doctrine of the primitive Church was on the subject of impurity and incontinence; we have seen how unanimous the Fathers were in demanding of the faithful a chaste and decent life, even when the latter did not feel capable of submitting to Christian celibacy. There was not, however, in view of this prescription of absolute chastity for all the members in Christ Jesus, any ecclesiastical jurisprudence specially applicable to the agents of Prostitution. The Church, to be consistent with the very essence of its morality, could neither approve nor recognize as a legal fact Prostitution, which, none the less, was practiced under its very eyes, at the doors of its churches, as it had been at those of the temples. Prostitutes were but ordinary sinners whom grace and repentance might save from their shameful trade, and who might at any moment enter upon the way of salvation. As to the instigators of and the speculators in Prostitution, they were confused with the horde of libertines and had no special rank among the slaves of sin. It was for the confessors to regulate penance according to the sin in question and only to accord absolution upon the completion of this penance, which might be public if the sin had been public. All Prostitution, moreover, was included under the generic term of *fornication*, which, on the other hand, was distinguished by various degrees; simple, double, eventual, permanent or repeated fornication. It was, then, quite natural that, in accordance with this fundamental principle which would make of every Christian an austere defender of the purity of his body, legal Prostitution should cease to have a reason for being in the eyes of the Church, which did not dare either to authorize, to proscribe or to tolerate it. The councils make no mention of this moral leprosy of society before the fifteenth century, and they take refuge in generalities, condemning under one head all forms of debauchery. They seem to avoid, in dealing with this delicate point, raising any contradiction with human laws, which regulated Prostitution and which recognized it as a slavery to the passions on the part of the mob. The councils appear to have remembered, always, that the Magdalen was a woman of evil life, and that the *meretrices* had furnished as many martyrs as had princesses to the faith

of Christ, which is possessed of an infinite mercy for all sinners.

And yet, there is room to believe that the Church, from the point of view of human policing and the economy of the state, admitted legal Prostitution, or at least shut its eyes to this sorrowful necessity in the lives of peoples. This opinion of the Church is to be found clearly and formally enunciated, not in the text of any council or synod, but in the writings of St. Augustine. "Suppress the Courtesan," he says, in his *Treatise on Order* (Book II, Chapter 12), "and you will overthrow everything by the caprice of the passions." The ecclesiastical law did not interfere with the civil law. St. Jerome (*Epist. ad Furiam*) seems to share St. Augustine's view regarding the unfortunate victims of Prostitution; he would not crush them under the weight of their own ignominy; he would merely encourage them to lay aside their infamous livery: "The courtesan of the Gospel, baptized in her tears (*meretrix illa in Evangelio baptizata lachrymis suis*), drying with her hair the feet of the Lord, was saved; she did not have a frizzled mitre, creaking shoes; she did not have eyes blackened with antimony; she was not more beautiful for being immodest (*non habuit crispantes mitras, non stridentes calceolos, nec orbes stibio fuliginatos: quanto foedior, tanto pulchrior*)." In another passage of the same epistle, St. Jerome takes up again the question of the degraded woman, by extending to her the balm of penitence. "We do not demand of Christians," he says, "how they have begun, but how they have ended!" The baptism of tears might always wash away former defilements and regenerate a soul in an impure body. Finally, St. Jerome, under another circumstance (*Epist. ad Fabiolam*), defines legal Prostitution as the jurisconsult Ulpianus had done, and states with the precision of a barrister: "The courtesan is she who abandons herself to debauchery with many men (*meretrix est quae multorum libidini patet*)."\*

We have made a conscientious effort to see what we could find concerning Prostitution, either in the *Canons of the Apostles*, or in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which did not precede the Acts of the councils, despite the origin which was attributed to them in the ancient Church, but which, however, do contain the sincere expression of the canonical doctrine of the early Christians. In only a single instance is there a question of Prostitution properly so-called (*scortatio*); but in a

\**Translator's Note*:—The stress in this definition of Prostitution is, it will be noted, upon the *promiscuity*.

number of places, there is reference to simple or double fornication. In the *Canons of the Apostles*, the sixth forbids the bishop and priests from putting away their wives, even under the pretext of religion, and punishes with excommunication those who thus evade the bonds of matrimony. The eighteenth Canon forbids the admitting of *bigamists* into the clergy, that is to say, those who had been married twice, for the reason that there was a sort of indecency attached to a second marriage, bearing witness to the incontinence of one of the parties. The twenty-third Canon ordains the deposition of clerics who had been deprived of their sexual attributes, from fear of sin or from some other cause. The twenty-fourth condemns the laity for the same reason, and restrains the guilty ones from the holy table for a period of three years. The sixty-first Canon forbids admitting to the clergy anyone convicted of adultery or fornication. The sixty-seventh Canon, finally, pronounces an excommunication against anyone committing an act of violence on a virgin, and obliges the guilty one to marry his victim. We shall remark that in the *Canons of the apostles*, which like the *Apostolic Constitutions* are written in Greek, the act of Prostitution is specified under the names of *adultery* (*moicheia*) and fornication (*kamarosis*). The Greek word, like the Latin, which is translated by *fornication*, properly signifies a vault or a vaulted place, being figuratively extended to the act itself, which was accomplished in such a place. We do not see this word in use in its figurative sense until we find the ecclesiastical writers employing it to replace *meretricium*, *scortatio* and other terms still more indecent.

In the *Apostolic Constitutions*, attributed to Pope Clement, elected in the year 67 A. D., but certainly edited in the third century in accordance with the traditions of the primitive Church, we find indicated a rule of conduct which Christian women are to follow in order not to be like the idolaters who had no morals and who felt the need of none. The Christian women must, first of all, avoid showing themselves in public with those aids to the toilet which the editor of this sacred code alludes to as the signs of Prostitution (*quod sunt omnia meretriciae consuetudinis indicia*, says the literal Latin version): combed hair, artistically arranged and anointed with perfumes, a studied and precious costume, large footgear, falling over the feet, rings of gold on all the fingers. "If you wish to be faithful to your divine Bridegroom," says the Christian legislator, "and if you wish to please him, envelop the head when you appear in the

street; veil your face to avoid indiscreet glances; and do not rouge that face which God has given you, but walk with lowered eyes, remaining always veiled, as decency commands women to do (Book I, Chapter 8)." It was forbidden the two sexes to bathe together in the same baths; "it is there especially that the Devil lays his snares," says the text, "and so a woman shall not go to the bath except with women. Let her bathe herself modestly and moderately, never vainly, never too much, never at midday and, if possible, not every day (*lavet modeste, verecunde et moderate, non autem superracue, neque nimis, neque saepius, neque meridie, immo si fieri potest, non quotidie*)." The Church did not vary in its advice on the question of bodily ablutions, the use of which it condemned without prohibiting them.

In Book VII of the *Constitutions*, the legislator very clearly defines the principal sins of the flesh: "We may distinguish," he says, "the abominable union against nature, and a union against the law; the first is that of the Sodomites, that ignoble debauchery which puts man on a level with the beasts; while the second includes adultery and Prostitution. In these offenses, there is first of all impiety, then iniquity, then, finally, sin; for the former sin against nature; the latter, on the contrary, do an injury to others when they violate the marriages of others, and when they put asunder those who have been made one by the Lord, when they render suspect the birth of children, and when they expose the legitimate husband to such snares as these; finally, Prostitution is the corruption of one's own body, and this corruption does not apply to the work of generation in producing children, but has no other object than pleasure, which is an indication of incontinence, and not a sign of strength." This remarkable passage, which sums up the whole doctrine of the Church on the subject of illicit and criminal relations, is here reproduced in its entirety in the original Latin version, in which the obscurities of the Greek text are somewhat clarified: "*Contra naturam nefaria conjunctio aut illa contra legem, illa Sodomitarum et cum bestiis miscentium flagitiosa libido, contra legem vero adulterium et scortatio: ex quibus libidinibus, in illis quidem impietas est, in iis vero injuria et denique peccatum. . . . Primi enim interitum mundi machinantur, qui quod a natura est contra naturam facere conantur; secundi vero injuriam aliis faciunt, cum aliena matrimonia violant et quod a Deo factum est unum in duo dividunt et liberos faciunt suspectos et legitimum maritum insidiis exponunt: ac scortatio corruptio est proprii corporis, quae non ad-*



*hibetur ad generationem filiorum, sed tota ad voluptatem spectat, quod est indicium incontinentiæ non autem virtutis signum*" (Book VIII, Chapter 27).

This undoubtedly is the first canonical text in which Prostitution is clearly referred to as one of the most blameworthy forms of impurity. In another passage of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Christians are forbidden to employ obscene words, to indulge in brazen glances, and to give themselves to wine. "It is of this," says the text, "that adulteries and prostitutions are born (*non eris turpiloquens neque injector oculorum neque vino lentus; hinc enim scortationes et adulteria oriuntur.*)"—Book VII, Chapter 7). Elsewhere (Book IV, Chapter 5), the ecclesiastical law commands the faithful to "flee debauchery; 'for,' says Deuteronomy, 'you shall not offer the gods the price of Prostitution (*fugiendi præterea scortatores; non offeres, inquit Deuteronomus, Deo mercedem prostibuli*).'" The *Apostolic Constitutions*, although edited after the first councils, contain the original doctrine of Christianity, coming from the Scriptures and the Gospel. This same doctrine was later expanded and interpreted in the decisions of the councils. Thus, the opinion of the Church has not varied on the subject of Prostitution, which it terms *adultery* or *fornication*.

The famous council of Elvira, or Elna, which appears rather to have been a collection of a number of councils, since we do not know at what time it was held, scholars placing it sometimes in the year 250 and sometimes in 324, this council, *Eliberatanum* or *Illiberitanum*, affords us a certain number of decisions on the subject in hand which are not at variance with the *Apostolic Constitutions*. The twelfth Canon deprives of communion, even of the last sacrament, mothers, parents and all others who shall prostitute their daughters. It also excommunicates the one who practices *lenocinium* by selling his own body or that of his neighbor: *Si lenocinium exercuerit eo quod alienum vendiderit corpus vel potius suum.* The thirteenth Canon utters the same penalty against those who, after having been consecrated to God, shall have violated their vow and lived in debauchery. The fourteenth Canon: "Girls who shall have failed to preserve their virginity, without having vowed it, shall be reconciled after a year of penance, if they wed their corrupters; the penance is fixed at five years if they have known a number of men." The Council, in this article, which was reformed as being too indulgent by later councils, looks upon the loss of a virginity not con-

secrated to God as a violation of Christian marriage. According to the twenty-seventh Canon, a bishop or any other cleric might keep in his house his sister or his daughter, provided she was a virgin, but he might not keep a strange woman. The thirty-first Canon is very elastic and embraces all species of Prostitution; this Canon says that young people who, after baptism, have fallen into the sin of impurity shall be admitted to communion after penance and marriage. It is a far step from this Canon to the rule of St. Basil, who ordained four years of penance for simple fornication, and that of Gregory of Nazianze, who extends the penance to nine years. The moderation of the penalty of the council of Elvira is sufficient proof that this council does not date from later than the fifth century.

The forty-first Canon of this council has a direct bearing on the facts of Prostitution, for it exhorts the faithful not to suffer an idol in their houses, and to remain pure of idolatry in cases where they fear the violence of slaves through depriving the latter of their idols. Now these domestic idols were those of the little obscene gods who presided over the mysteries of love and generation. We have described elsewhere, after St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church, those indecent divinities which the ancients installed in their sleeping chambers, and which they worshiped while engaged in the labors of a lover or a husband. The god Subicus and the goddess Prema were, most assuredly, survivals of Jupiter the Thunderer and Venus the Victorious, or the Armed Venus. The forty-fourth Canon of the council expressly ordains receiving into the communion of the faithful a woman who has been a prostitute and who afterwards marries a Christian (*meretrix quae aliquando fuerit et postea habuerit meritum*). Thus, the Church did not recognize the indelible brand of ignominy which Roman law had attached to Prostitution. The sixty-third Canon excommunicates forever, a woman who, pregnant as the result of adultery, shall do away with her young. The sixty-fourth Canon excommunicates in a similar manner women who shall have lived in adultery up to the time of their deaths. The sixty-seventh Canon forbids women, whether of the faithful or catechumens, under pain of excommunication, to have relations with comedians or musicians. According to the sixty-ninth Canon, those individuals male or female, who shall have fallen a single time into adultery shall do a penance of five years, and shall not be granted absolution before the end of the period, except in case

of a mortal malady. The seventieth Canon makes a grave distinction in the matter of adultery and has to do with one of the most common circumstances of Prostitution: it orders that the wife who shall have committed adultery with the consent of her husband shall be excommunicated, even upon her deathbed; but it limits the penance to ten years, if this wife has been repudiated by her husband. Finally, the seventy-first Canon definitely excommunicates the corrupters of children (*stupratoribus puerorum*).

It might be said that the doctrine of the Church regarding Prostitution is to be found in the Canons of the council of Elvira, for no other council, up to that of Trent, enters into so many questions relative to this state of sin. In the following councils, we meet only with isolated articles, which merely repeat or complete those of the council of Elvira, for the majority of these councils were convoked in order to combat and condemn special heresies, which had to do with dogma rather than with morality. We may remark, nevertheless, in the acts of these different councils, Canons which contain precious details for the historian of manners. At the council of Neocaesarea, held in 314, it was decided that a man who, having the desire to commit sin with a woman, did not commit it, must have been preserved by the grace of God rather than restrained by his own virtue. At the council of Nicaea in 325, in opposition to the heresy of the Valesians, who devoted all their zeal to making eunuchs in the name of God, the first Canon was made to declare that the man who had been made a eunuch, either by surgeons in case of illness, by barbarians or by heretics, might remain in the clergy, but that he who had mutilated himself, or had been mutilated with his own consent, could not remain a cleric. The majority of the clergy being thus in jealous possession of their virility, the eighteenth Canon forbids them generally to have any woman in their houses except mothers, sisters, aunts or some old woman who could not be suspected of cohabitation. The council of Laodicea, held in 364, which dealt chiefly with the life of the clergy, forbade women, whoever they might be, from entering the sanctuary, and this without any explanation as to the motive of the restriction, and with no exceptions. One Canon of the council of Nicaea, the twenty-ninth, gives us a highly categorical account of the motives of this prohibition: *Ne mulier menstruata ingrediatur ecclesiam neque sumat sacram communionem, donec complentur dies illius mundationis et purificationis, quamvis sit in regum mulieribus.*

Thus, in connection with the forbidding of the holy places to women during the more or less extended period of their natural purgation, no exception was made, even in favor of queens and princesses. Since women were the sole judges in such cases, the Church found it more simple to make the prohibition definite and perpetual in order to prevent a sacrilege. The opinion of the Fathers of the Church regarding the feminine sex was only too well calculated to justify this exclusion from the sanctuary: "The bodies of holy women," one of their most eloquent advocates had said, "are veritable temples (*sanctarum feminarum corpora templa sunt*)."

But this is the manner in which one council characterized women in general: "The woman is the gate of Hell, the path of iniquity, the bite of the scorpion, an obnoxious species (*femina janua diaboli, via iniquitatis, scorpionis, percussio, nocivum tenus*)."

Woman's malice, in all its baseness, was manifested at the council of Tyre, in the year 353, at which the Arians indulged in a number of false denunciations against St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria. A woman of an evil life, known for her debaucheries (*muliercula libidinosa ac petulans*, says one authority), was introduced into the assembly of the Fathers of the council; she declared loudly that she had made a vow of virginity, and that Athanasius, by way of rewarding her for the hospitality he had received of her, had so far forgotten himself as to make a violent attack upon her. Athanasius, accompanied by a priest named Timothy, was then brought in. He was interrogated as to the act of rape which had been imputed to him; he seemed not to hear and did not reply, as though he could not understand the questions which were addressed to him. But Timothy spoke for him and said gently: "I have never been in your house, woman!" She, more impudent than ever, began to re-criminate and to argue with Timothy; she put out her hand and swore by a ring which she pretended she had received from Athanasius: "You have taken away my virginity," she exclaimed in an outburst of passion, "you have despoiled me of my purity!" She made use of terms and insults which only the prostitutes were in the habit of employing, without Athanasius' deigning to refute these odious accusations. Finally, the Fathers of the council grew ashamed of the scandal and had the wretched creature who had outraged their modesty led out. Athanasius, nevertheless, was condemned to a twenty-year exile. The council then decided that the entering of houses where



clergy dwelt should be forbidden to women, no matter who the women were. The Council of Carthage, in the year 397, improved upon this prudent measure by ordering that the clergy and those who had made a vow of continence should not visit virgins or widows without the permission of a bishop or superior, and that, in any case, they should, out of prudence, go heavily chaperoned.

The conversion of sinful women was the constant preoccupation of the early Christians, and they chose out of preference from the ranks of Prostitution penitent souls which they might offer to God as a holocaust. But in this haste to make catechumens, the deacons only too often admitted impure women, who had not abjured their shameful mode of life, and who returned to sin again, even as they left the communion-table. The Councils then came to demand guaranties of repentance and expiation before transforming courtezans into the brides of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine sums up, on this point, the express doctrine of the Councils by saying (*Lib. de fide et oper.*, Chapter XI) that no Church was to be found which would admit public women (*publicas meretrices*) to baptism before they had been cleansed of the defilements of their trade. In another place (*De octo ad dulcit. quaest.*), he states almost the same thing in the same terms (*nisi ab illa primitus prostitutione libertas*). But once this reconciliation had been effected in accordance with the prescribed forms, once baptism and communion had been received, a prostitute might become, in the sight of God, and of the Christian who married her, as pure as a virgin, provided she retained none of the habits of her past life in the state of marriage. Such is the opinion of the council of Toledo in the year 750: *Licet fuerit meretrix, licet prostituta, licet multis corruptoribus exposita, si nuptiale incontaminatum foedus servaverit, prioris vitae maculas posterior munditia diluit*. The same council failed to recognize adultery prior to marriage for either man or woman absolved by penance, the understanding being that all illicit relations preceding marriage were to be looked upon as an act of lust and not of adultery (*et quidem talis coitus luxuriae, sed non adulterii*). The conversion of women of an evil life was more frequent than any other conversions, for the courtesan was readily astonished at a transformation which suddenly placed her on a footing with virgins and which promised her the refuge of marriage. But the Church merely effaced those sins of impurity which had been committed before baptism, while those which followed the sacrament left

an indelible scar; no agent of Prostitution could be received into the clergy unless his defilement had been washed away by baptism. Tarisius, bishop of Constantinople, in a letter addressed to the Council of Nicaea, in the year 787, says expressly that he has seen courtezans and debauchees absolved by penitence (*meretrices et publicanos receptos per poenitentiam*, says the Latin translation of this letter, which was written in Greek); but if, after baptism, a man or woman had been taken in a flagrant act of Prostitution or adultery (*in scortatione aut adulterio*), he was no longer to be permitted the exercise of sacerdotal functions. Among the Fathers and the Doctors, who labored especially for the reconciliation of lost women, we shall mention a holy patriarch named Polemon, whom the ecclesiastical historians do the wrong of passing over in silence, but whose portrait wrought a number of similar conversions after his death. (See the *Collect. des conciles*, edited by Cossart, Volume VII, page 206, et. seq.) St. Gregory of Nazianze has related, in beautiful Greek verse, a miracle of this sort that was much talked of at the end of the fourth century. A young man, tormented by the demon of incontinence, called out to a prostitute in front of a church, the door of which was open. This woman, running up to the young debauchee, perceived in the church a portrait of the venerable Polemon, whose eyes were fixed upon her. At sight of this threatening portrait, she was troubled and ran away with lowered head; the following day she was converted, and she died in the odor of sanctity. St. Basil, Bishop of Ancyra, praises in council this admirable portrait, which possessed so great a virtue that the most hardened libertine could not gaze upon that holy face without blushing with shame and renouncing his incontinence: *ex illa patrata est, nisi enim vidisset scortum iconem Polemonis, nequaquam a stupro cessasset*. At the same council, St. Nicephorus, Bishop of Dyrrachium, stated that this marvelous image ought to be venerated by the faithful, since it possessed the power of preventing a fallen woman from practicing her execrable trade (*quoniam potuit mulierculam liberare ab execrabili et turpi operatione*).

We might even believe, from certain passages in the Fathers and certain acts of the councils, that incontinence was formerly more widespread than it is today. It is possible the vices and the customs of antiquity had developed in man the faculty of succumbing to monstrous abuses of virility; it is possible also, that the excesses of Christian continence produced in certain energetic natures a terrific revolt

of the senses. St. Augustine, in his *Confessions*, has eloquently depicted the formidable struggles he had to endure against the demon of the flesh: "My heart was all inflamed and frothing with impudicity; it shook me greatly, broke its bonds and burst forth in debauchery (*et jactabar et effundebam, et ebulliebam per fornicationes meas*).” St. Jerome, in his *Epistle to Furia*, energetically depicts the sensual tempests of young libertines, exalted by the fumes of wine and inflamed with good cheer: "*Non Aetnaei ignes,*" he says, "*non Vulcania tellus, non Vesuvius et Olympus tantis ardoribus aestuant, ut juveniles medullae vino plenae et dapibus inflammatae; nihil hic inflammat corpora aut titillat membra genitalia, sicut indigestus cibus ructusque convulsus.*" The deduction, according to these ecclesiastical authorities, was that if one ate and drank with fury, one was all the more impatient for debauchery. The Church sought, then, to extinguish the fires of concupiscence by submitting them to the most frugal and sober régime; for the Church was not unaware how difficult it is to alter in any manner the human temperament and the ideas and customs of a pagan world, which did not regard fornication either as bad in itself or as illicit (*simplicem fornicationem non esse per se malam neque illicitam*, says St. Augustine, *contra Faust*, II, Chapter 13). Outbursts of sensuality were so violent among the early Christians that sometimes they would go from the Church to the lupanar and there defile themselves by infamous relations with a courtesan after they had received the divine Body of Christ. This was that horrible adultery which the Church describes in these terms: *Infame meretricis et Christi corpus uno et eodem tempore contractare*.

The bishops, the deacons and the other servants of the altar did not always possess the strength to hold out against these defilements, and, to make use of the beautiful expression of one Council, they did not dare lay before God the unclean work of their hands. The Council of Carthage, in the year 390, recommended to priests and all others who administered the sacraments that they should be the austere guardians of their own modesty, and that they should abstain from approaching their wives in case they were married (*pudicitiae custodes, etiam ab uxoribus se abstineant, ut in omnibus et ab ominibus pudicitia custodiatur, qui altari deserviunt*). It is probable that this continence of the conjugal couch was not prescribed to married priests, except at certain times when they had to administer the sacraments or touch the sacred vessels, for the Church did not prohibit the decent and

moderate practice of the duties of marriage. The council of Gangra in Paphlagonia pronounced an anathema against anyone who should cast a reflection upon marriage by affirming that a woman cohabiting with a man could not be saved. The same council, while recognizing the excellence of Christian virginity, declined to approve a woman's dressing as a man under pretext of more easily preserving her continence in this apparel. The Church, however, did not refuse its children the means of escaping the occasions of sin; thus, at the *agapai*, which the *Apostolic Constitutions* call festivals of charity or of love (*caritas*), when the two sexes found themselves united, and when this carnal approach might have serious results under the exciting influence of gluttony, poor old women were invited and placed as salutary obstacles between the young of the two sexes (*Const. apost.*, I, II, Chapter 28). On the other hand, the Church, however severe it might be in maintaining chastity within the communion of the faithful, appears to have authorized, at least in the fifth century, any Christian layman to take a concubine, and thus to give satisfaction to his flesh, without violating the bonds of Christian marriage. The seventeenth Canon of the Council of Toledo, in the year 400, prescribes that the one who has a wife and a concubine at the same time, shall be excommunicated, but not the one who is content either with a transient wife, or with a permanent concubine in order to satisfy the needs of nature: *Qui non habet uxorem et pro uxore concubinam habet, a communione non repellatur; tantum ut unius mulieris aut uxoris aut concubinae (ut ei placuerit) sit conjunctione contentus.* The Council of Rome, in the year 1059, still looked with accustomed eyes on concubine relations among the Christians, for the twelfth Canon of this council condemns only simultaneous cohabitation with a wife and a concubine. The Church tolerated, then, up to a certain point, illicit relations between a man and a woman who were not married, but who were united to each other by those bonds of mutual agreement which the Roman code had almost approved as legitimate. According to the spirit of Catholicism, adultery or fornication for the man began with the employment of two women, whoever they might be; and thus, intercourse with a number or a large number of men came to establish the degree of Prostitution for the woman, who, according to the fantastic doctrine of a casuist of the Middle Ages, was not to be recognized as a prostitute until after she had faced twenty-three-thousand different corrupters. According to other doc-



tors, more reserved in their figures, *meretricium* implied only from forty to sixty experiences of the same nature, after which a case of public impurity was sufficiently well established in a woman, who thereupon incurred the penance prescribed for prostitutes.

As to Prostitution itself, we do not see that the councils had made any effort to cause it to disappear from the civil life of Christian society. They appear, rather, to have accepted it as a necessary evil, destined to obviate greater ones; they nevertheless avoided formulating upon this point an opinion which would have given the lie to Evangelical morality, by reconciling it with the organic laws of human civilization. St. Thomas touched indirectly on this delicate question, when he remarked that man sought vainly to realize perfection in a world in which the Creator had permitted evil to have and to hold so great a place. This view of the existence of evil as an inevitable condition, essential to humanity, was an implicit admission of Legal Prostitution. (See the *Collection des Conciles*, edited by Labbé, Vol. XII. Col. 1165). The necessity of Prostitution having been admitted by the ecclesiastical authority, the Councils did not disdain to come to the aid of the secular authorities, and to suggest to the latter the rules which would be the most efficacious in restraining the evil within its proper limits, and in dissimulating it to the eyes of decent folk. "One of the Fathers of the council of Basle," says a learned historian of Prostitution in the Middle Ages, M. Rabutaux, "in 1434, laid before the Fathers of that assembly, in a discourse in which he concerned himself with correcting the manners of his time, the principles which had inspired the legislation of the Middle Ages, holding up these laws as being the least ineffective guardians of public decency." It is remarkable that canonical foresight did not add a few salutary provisions to Roman jurisprudence, which still regulated the practice of Prostitution in a majority of the countries of Europe. One might say that the councils, in even occupying themselves with a police matter which was repugnant to them, had carefully evaded a pronouncement from the moral and religious point of view. We must, then, come down to the middle of the sixteenth century, in order to meet, in the Acts of the Councils, with an article which evidences the system of toleration which the Church had adopted regarding Prostitution, looked upon as an institution of public utility. This article, despite its date, which is comparatively recent, may serve in establishing the true state of neutrality which the Church had

desired to preserve with regard to this important social question. It was at the Council of Milan under the episcopacy of St. Charles Borromeo, that the Fathers of the council introduced into the texts of those *Constitutions* which they had sanctioned a paragraph specially affecting prostitutes and procurers (tit. 65, *De meretricibus et lenonibus*). Following is a translation of this section, which reflects the jurisprudence of Theodosius and of Justinian, under the auspices of the bishops, the princes and magistrates of each country and each city in Christendom:

“In order that the prostitutes may be wholly distinct from decent women, the bishops shall see to it that they go clad in public in some form of habit which shall make known their shameful condition and their mode of life. They shall not be permitted, in case they are strangers in the locality, to pass the night in the wine-shops or in the inns (*in meritoriis tabernis vel publicis cauponis*), at least when the route they are taking does not authorize such a stop, in which case, they shall remain but a single day. In each city, the bishop shall take care to assign to these immodest creatures a place of sojourn, far from the cathedrals and the frequented quarters, in which place it shall be permitted them to dwell together, with this provision, that if they take up their domicile outside of that place, and that if they reside for more than a single day in any other house of the city for any cause whatsoever, they shall be severely punished, as well as the masters or tenants of the house in which they shall have so sojourned. This police measure is especially recommended to the enlightened piety of princes and magistrates. It is to them also that we address ourselves, urging them to forbid women of an evil way of life the use of precious stones, of gold, of silver, and of silken vestments. It is of them that we request, above all, the expulsion of all those infamous ones who practice the trade of procurer (*omnes qui lenocinio quaestim faciunt*).” We have reported in its entirety this section from the *Constitutions* of the Council of Milan, for the reason that it is unique in the history of Councils, and that it shows us the ecclesiastical power in perfect accord with the legal power in organizing, regulating and repressing public Prostitution, without destroying it and even without branding it with an anathema.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

THE ecclesiastical authority, which uttered its pronouncements through the voice of councils and the writings of the Fathers, however tolerant it may have been toward Legal Prostitution, that imperious infirmity of the body, social and political, still sought to extinguish Prostitution and to destroy the causes, with a zeal and a severity which never relented.\* Among the more or less immediate occasions of Prostitution, to which Christianity had directed the aversion of the faithful, we must mention, first of all, the games of the circus and theatrical performances, which included dances, pantomime and profane music. We have already spoken of the obscenity of these dances and pantomimes; we have stated that the circus and the theatre were but vestibules to the lupanar; we have indicated the true trade of the flute-players, the *citharoedae*, the players of the *psalterium*, the dancers and *saltatrices*; but the subject has been barely touched upon, and we have beheld but one of its aspects. We are, consequently, unable to refrain from coming back to it here more in detail, in order to obtain a more complete view of that terrible breeding-place of Prostitution which the Christian Church sought to wipe out or at least to regulate. It is not to be denied that the theatre among the Greeks and Romans had a bad effect upon public morals, being, so to speak, a permanent school of Prostitution. We shall be better able to explain the stubbornness of the doctors of the Church toward the theatre and toward everything which had to do with it, when we take account of the profound demoralization begot and encouraged by the passion for the theatre in pagan society, which hurled itself without restraint into the pursuit of sensual pleasures.

Although polytheism played, certainly, a great part in the creation of the ancient theatre, although mythology was incarnated in the popular dramas of Greece and Italy, although tragedy, in its origin, was but a form of the polytheistic mysteries, the Church undoubtedly would have pardoned the tragic and lyrical works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the theatre which we call heroic would have found grace in the face of the most rigorous censorship; but as

\**Translator's Note*.—Cf. the end of the preceding chapter. Lacroix appears to contradict himself.

a result of the relaxation of manners, at the period when Christianity was endeavoring to found itself upon the basis of morality, tragedy, that old and chaste muse who formerly had taught virtue to a people capable of being moved with admiration and respect,—tragedy at this epoch appeared to have descended from its tripod and to have been banished from the temple; it had been replaced by comedy, that mad and libertine muse who, under pretext of correcting vices, amused itself by depicting them under the most engaging colors, and who brazenly exhibited upon the stage those turpitudes commonly concealed in the bosom of families and in the depths of hearts. The satiric school of Aristophanes and of Eupolis, while permitting itself many indecencies in language, had appealed to the malice of the spectators, rather than to their libertinism; the joyous and pleasing school of Menander and of Plautus had brought at once laughter and reflection to an enlightened public, which took pleasure in the performance of these comic masterpieces; but neither Menander nor Philemon nor Plautus nor their disciples and imitators were any longer there to display that decency by which comedy appeared to have been marked in the past; the contemporary dramatists, on the contrary, had abandoned themselves to all the license of their imaginations, without fearing to offend the eyes and ears of their auditors. Their object may have been to bring a blush as in the presence of a mirror; in any event, they were not careful of the expressions which they employed to describe the ridiculous amours of old men, the passions and the follies of youth, the baseness of parasites, the avidity of usurers, the perfidy of valets, the infamies of slave-merchants and lenons or the ruses and artifices of courtezans. This tribe, moreover, spoke their own language in the theatre, and the fear of scandal never restrained a comic poet from penning a *bon mot*. Never either was the frenzied applause of the mob lacking for these immodest trivialities.

And yet, Christian austerity would undoubtedly have relented in view of the literary esteem which the great Greek and Latin comics had acquired in spite of their licentious images and immoral precepts; but this high comedy, which was still marked only by scenes taken from the intimate life of courtezans, had become, so to speak, even more prostituted than the prostitutes themselves, and had ended by degenerating into the mimes and *atellanae*. The Church of Jesus Christ could not at once preach chastity and permit the theatre to exist in



the presence of the Evangelic seat. The downfall of the theatre was therefore decreed, like that of the pagan temples, but the temples did not hold out so long as the theatre. Even tragedy found itself included in this proscription, which struck indifferently at all sorts of spectacles, all sorts of actors, all sorts of profane amusements. The ecclesiastical law was in accord with the Roman law on this point, by inflicting a certain infamy upon those who took part in theatrical performances; moreover, it declared such persons excluded from its communion, and it treated with no less rigor those poets and musicians who lent their aid to *theatrical immodesty*. It was not, probably, to the theatre itself that the Fathers of the Church felt a need of addressing these reproofs; it was, rather, to its obscene and impious features that they opposed a barrier which for a long time rendered innocuous amusements of this character. Thus, in the anathemas which Tertullian, Lactantius, St. Cyprian and other Fathers launch against the theatre, there is not even an allusion to those fetes of Bacchus which were the cradle of the dramatic art, and in the course of which a choir of Fauns and Bacchantes, besmeared with wine-lees and garlanded with leaves, sang lascivious songs and danced about the filthy images which they bore in triumph. The ancient Greeks had judged their own comedy as harshly as the Fathers of the Church were to do later, for they described it as an elegant and facetious courtesan (*meretricula elegans et faceta*, says the Jesuit Boulanger, in his book *De Theatro*); St. Cyprian calls the theatre a school of impurity, St. Jerome refers to it as an arsenal of Prostitution.

But we are not concerned here with assembling all the accusations, all the griefs of the Church against the theatre, whatever their nature may be; we desire merely to show the scandalous excesses of obscenity which decided the Christian bishops to condemn without distinction everything that had to do with the pagan theatre. At the beginning of this canonical persecution, the object of which was to track down indecency upon the stage, the public no longer took pleasure in performances of high comedy; Aristophanes, Menander, Plautus and the principal comic authors of Athens and of Rome figured less frequently on the stage than they did in libraries. And it was to the library that Catholic anathema went to seek them out, a deplorable religious zeal being displayed in the destruction of all those lively poetic masterpieces to which Greek and Roman morals had given

a licentious varnish. It was the courtezans, the procuresses, the *cinaedi*, the debauchees, who caused the loss of so many fine pieces. That is why there have come down to us only formless fragments of Menander, who had composed one hundred and ten comedies, and who had outdone himself in painting the picture of Prostitution. We have even less of Philemon, of Eupolis and the other Greek comics condemned by the freedom of their pleasantries and the audacity of their brushes to be burned without absolution. Plautus would have perished like Menander, whom he imitated, if a happy accident had not preserved a score of his comedies, which serve to give us an idea of that Greek comedy which was devoted to the history of courtezans and their amours, as tragedy had been to the history of the gods and of heroes. As for Aristophanes, it would be difficult to say why he has almost entirely survived the systematic annihilation of theatric works; if he has been spared, despite the abominable license of his dialogue, we may suppose with some appearance of probability that it was, simply, that the Fathers of the Church were not averse to permitting a poet to survive, who had put upon the stage the gods and goddesses of Paganism, at the same time fustigating these deities with satire, and besmearing them with mud and spittle. Lucian owes to a similar motive the preservation of his works entire, despite the obscenities which have caused them to be placed upon the Index of the Christian Church.

That Church, which did not condone the written monuments to theatrical license, was more indulgent toward the authors and accomplices. Whoever stepped upon the stage acquired an indelible brand according to the Roman law; but this brand was effaced in the communion of Christians, if the repentant actor abjured his ignominious calling. "If any comedian," say the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VIII, Chapter 32), "is received into the bosom of the Church, whether it be a man or a woman, a jockey of the circus, a gladiator, a runner, a director of the theatre, an athlete, a chorister, a harp or lyre-player, an equilibrist or a master of mountebanks, he must renounce his trade or be excluded from the communion of the faithful." This excommunication, as we have already stated, rested equally upon all sinners who lived by the theatre, even though they were not all equally blameworthy; for in the eyes of the Fathers, the theatre, of whatever nature, was the domain of lust and obscenity. *Theatra luxuriant*, says St. Jerome (*Epist. ad Marcel*): "The theatres

engender lust." Tertullian, in his book on the heresy of Marcion, denounced the criminal pleasures of the circus and its fury, the orchestra and its vertigo, and the theatre and its license (*voluptates circi furentis, caveae insanientis, scenae lascivientis*). We have seen what took place in a great circus of Rome, at the Floralia, where the presence of Cato had prevented the people from giving the signal for the hideous spectacle. Despite Cato, despite the admonitions of the philosophers, despite the edicts of the consuls, the Floralia continued to be celebrated in the same manner; and Lactantius, who describes them (Book I, Chapter 20), supplies us with sufficient evidence as to the difficulties which Christianity encountered in depriving the pagan populace of its ignoble pleasures. "In addition to the licentious words, which burst forth in a torrent of obscenity," says the holy author of the *Divine Institutions*, "the *meretrices*, to the impatient cries of the spectators, are despoiled of their garments. It is they who on that day are charged with acting out the mimes; and under the eyes of all the people, until the immodest gaze of the latter is assuaged, they execute their infamous movements (*cum pudendis motibus detinetur*)." Arnobius, who also relates these incredible scandals, opines that the courtesan Flora herself would have beat a shamed retreat, like that of Cato, if she could have witnessed the abominations in her honor, and which merely transported the lupanar to the theatres (*si suis in ludis flagitiosas conspexerit res agi et migratum ab lupanarides in theatra*). If the Roman Floralia still took place in the third century of the Christian era, we may judge from this how great was the obscenity of those theatrical performances to which the Catholic Church was already victoriously opposing its preachings and its abstinences.

Comedy "in a toga" *togata*, was addressed only to cultivated minds, and, as a consequence, to but a small number; St. Cyprian, in his 103rd *Epistle*, condemns no less the elements of Greek and Latin comedy: the intrigue of the characters; the deceits of adulterers; the immodesty of women; the ridiculous buffoons; the shameful parasites; and those fathers of families, those patricians, sometimes simpletons and sometimes obscene: "All the actors," he says with indignation, "whether they are depicting a sacred or profane subject, are merely stirring up the mire of the theatre, not only because the pieces they play are indecent, but because their movements and their gestures are immodest, because, often, the acts of Prostitution are

translated upon the stage, and because Prostitution is practiced, at the same time, under the stage (*actores omnes, cum sacritum profani, spurciliam scenae exagitant, non modo quod fabulae obscenae in scena agerentur, sed etiam quod motus, gestusque essent impudici, atque adeo prostibula ipsa in scenam saepe venirent et sub scena prostarent*).” We have, as a matter of fact, with the aid of the erotic poets, already given a picture of that Prostitution which took place in the theatres and the circuses, and which set up its impure markets at the gates, in the public squares, and even under the vaults (*fornices*) of the edifice where the games were celebrated. This fact alone shows us clearly enough what part Prostitution played in the customs of the theatre. It is true that decent women, mothers and matrons, were present but rarely at the performances; but the lenons, male and female, the famous courtezans and the popular *meretrices*, the *cinaedi* and the *spadones*, had a free field, and each of these classes profited from those sensual instigations inseparable from the theatric games, in order to carry on their despicable trades. The proscenium of the theatre was especially reserved for young courtezans addicted to the most disgusting debauchery. Plautus, in the prologue to his *Poenulus*, desires to expel them from the proscenium: *Scortum exoletum ne quis in proscenio sedeat*. In the most conspicuous seats were to be seen foreign women of fashion, wearers of the mitre, who would send their emissaries to await, receive or solicit, here and there, an offer or a proposition. The highest seats were reserved for the dregs of Prostitution, who scattered themselves in the vomitories, and who soiled with their impurities the vast and somber substructure of the theatre or the amphitheatre. These included not merely *meretrices*, but also children who had been sold into debauchery and who prostituted themselves in the bad houses which were, so to speak, an annex of these spectacles. The Jesuit, Boulanger, says so expressly, in his treatise, *De Circo Romano*, and he does not seek to conceal the execrable use to which the arches of the theatre were put: *Certe ad omnia pene gymnasia et spectacula, erant popinae et ganeae utrique veneri masculae et femineae*. We may suppose, from a number of passages in the Book of Maccabees, that the ignoble sanctuaries of the male Venus were called in Greek and Latin *ephebia*. Christianity, in order to accomplish the annihilation of the *ephebia*, did not care to leave a single theatre standing.

Both spectators and actors strove to see how immodest they could



be, but the most brazen comedy was chaste beside the pantomimes and the mimes, which seemed only to have been invented in order to serve as auxiliaries to Prostitution. Among the Greeks, theatrical performances, sometimes mute and translated into gestures, sometimes rendered into dialogue and spoken, sometimes sung and danced, derived from the rustic festivals which had been instituted in honor of Bacchus, Pan, and the rural divinities. It was no longer a case of phallic hymns, repeated in chorus by drunken peasants as they leaped about their half-emptied amphorae, while others with cords agitated certain obscene images (*oscilla*), suspended by pins and taking on, from the movement communicated to them, the most licentious forms and aspects. The phallic chants, undoubtedly, had been perpetuated in the villages of Attica, where the joyous chariot of Thespis still went its bacchanalian way. But this crude spectacle had assumed in the cities, a more theatric character, without losing anything of its primitive obscenity. Such were the original *diceliae*, the *magodiae* and the *mimes*. The players in the *diceliae* whom the Sicyonians called *phallophores*, never appeared upon the stage except when adorned with the attributes of Priapus, of the god Termes, of Pan and the Satyrs, who presided at these gay and popular debaucheries; but all their buffooneries did not come from that. As to the *magodiae*, the actors, whom Athenaeus designated under the name of *magodes*, were dressed like women or debauchees, whose emblematic sign was an upright stick, called *areskos*; they played the rôles of drunkards and grotesque villagers, and expressed themselves by gestures and grimaces. In the mimes, on the contrary, mountebanks added to these indecent grimaces and gestures infamous songs and dialogues not less indecent. The mimes came to Rome and were accompanied by all the voluptuous accessories of music and the dance. The buffoons, who played in the street-corner comedies, had shaved heads, and wore, along with flat shoes, a vari-colored habit like that of the prostitutes of low degree. The pantomimes, which did not have recourse to dialogue, employed the prodigious resources of the mimetic art in staging the most obscene episodes from mythology. Finally, the *atellanae*, which recalled, frequently, the satiric verve of an Aristophanes, and which attacked various persons by loudly assailing their vices and defects, did not disdain to gather their *bons mots* from the slough of Prostitution. These *atellanae*, originally of Atella, a city of Campania, were the national comedy of Italy, and preserved more than one tradition of the Lupercalia.

The mythologic pantomimes were always those which appealed the most to the passions of the spectators. Long before they were shown, in public, they had been the delight of the *comissationes*, and of the nights of Greece as well as of Rome. Xenophon, in the *Banquet*, has described one of these pantomimes, which, although free enough, will not convey so much as an idea of what this species of spectacle later became, when it had passed from the festival hall to a theatric light of day. A certain Syracusan master-of-pantomime, announces in these terms what he has to offer to his audience; "Citizens, here is Ariadne who is about to enter the nuptial chamber; Bacchus, who has been committing a little debauchery with the gods, will come find her, and both will plunge into drunken pleasure. . . . We see Ariadne enter, clad in the habits of a bride; she sits, pensive and trembling. Bacchus appears in the costume of a god walking to the rhythm of those triumphal airs which were sacred to the solemn festivals. Ariadne indicates by her gestures how charmed she is at the arrival of her bridegroom. But she is careful not to anticipate him; she does not leave her place, but her panting bosom, her blushing cheeks, her trembling body, all betray her emotion. Bacchus perceives her suddenly and comes toward her passionately." The pantomime expresses clearly, however unchastely, what words do not dare to say, and it supplies, in a manner, the language of the gods. We may without difficulty imagine what the fable of Pasiphaë was like, that of Leda, that of Ixion and others equally monstrous, interpreted by this pantomime, which strove to be as faithful as it was eloquent. Ordinarily, the feminine roles were taken by young lads who, to employ the energetic expression of St. Jerome, had been broken in from infancy to this effeminate trade: "*In scenis theatralibus*," says St. Jerome, "*unus atque indem histrio nunc mollis in venerem frangitur, nunc tremulus in Cybelem*." We may understand how, at the sight of these impure gesticulations (*impuris motibus scenicorum*, as St. Augustine says in his *City of God*), those who preserved a remnant of modesty would turn away blushing; but they learned, nevertheless, in this school of lubricity, those hideous debaucheries which they later endeavored to imitate, if not to surpass.

There were, however, comediennes, although the majority of feminine roles were given to men, in order still more to excite the passions of the most depraved. These comediennes, whatever may have been their business upon the stage, were even more looked down upon than

the actors. They had need, the truth is, of forgetting their sex's modesty in order to lend themselves to the duties of their profession. Procopius, in his history, has drawn the portrait of a courtesan of the theatre, whom this indecent art had rendered as famous as her beauty. This sixth-century portrait from the life will show us that, at this period, despite the constant efforts of the Christian Church, the theatre had not yet submitted to a moral reform demanded by all the doctors and bishops: "As soon as she had attained the age of puberty, although born of free condition, she desired to be registered among those women who prostituted themselves upon the stage. She became thus a *meretrix* of the theatre, like those unfortunate ones who are called *pedaneae*, for the reason that they go to seek their fortune at the feasts without bringing along any musical instruments, or rather, because they make their bed upon the earth when they yield to their gross assailants (*quia ad terram se subigendas moechis substernerent*, is the translation of the Jesuit, Boulanger); for she had neither flute nor harp; she had not even learned to dance in the orchestra; but she sold her person to all she met, making a traffic of all parts of her body. Finally, she offered her services for the mimes and for whatever work was to be done in the theatre, and, becoming the companion of buffoons, she shared in their theatric labors and played her rôle in the performances. Occasionally she appeared altogether nude in the eyes of the people, and would remain in this state of nudity, in the middle of the stage, without any other garment than a light veil about her loins (*bouthonas diazoma echousa monon*)."

This impudent nudity, these obscene gestures, these disgusting pantomimes serve only too well to confirm the rigorous judgment of Tertullian upon the theatre in general and upon the sorry victims of public debauchery (*publicae libidinis hostiae*) in particular: "Those executioners of their own modesty blush at least once a year for the horrible prostitutions for which they are responsible, and by which the people are frequently terrified!" St. Basil adds a last brush-stroke to the frightful picture which the Fathers of the Church have painted of theatrical impurity, by making us acquainted with the conduct of the spectators during the performance of the pantomimes. "The orchestra, which abounds in immodest spectacles," he says in his fourth homily, "is a public and common school of indecency for all who sit there, and the sound of the flutes and the dissolute songs

which lay hold of the souls of the auditors have no other end than to bring madness to all those insensate ones who give themselves over to debauchery, and who may be seen beating time with the *citharaedi* and the flute-players." The Greek in this singular passage is so expressive that we have not succeeded in translating it into French as literally as the Jesuit, Boulanger, has done it into Latin: *Orchestra, quae abundat spectaculis impudicis publica et communis schola impudicitiae iis qui assident, et tiliarum cantus et cantica meretricia insidentia audientium animis, nihil aliud persuadent, quam ut omnes foeditati studeant et imitentur citharistarum aut tibicinum pulsus.* For the Fathers, in condemning the obscenities of the theatre, made no scruple about depicting them and describing them without reticence; Arnobius speaks of those tremblings of the loins (*clunibus crispatis*) which he was unable to look upon calmly; and St. Cyprian defines pantomime as the art of expressing with the aid of the hands whatever obscenity there is in the fables of mythology. Lactantius affirms that this theatrical pantomime consisted especially of gestures and poses by means of which the dancers imitated all the nuances of pleasure (*impudici gestus, quibus infames feminae imitantur libidines quas saltando exprimunt*); Salvianus declares that it would take too long to enumerate these imitations of shameful things, all the verbal obscenities, all the obscene movements, all the filthiness of gesture. The Fathers, although Christians, grew indignant at seeing the gods and goddesses of Paganism consigned to the ignoble masquerades and the atrocious profanations of the pantomimes; Arnobius is astonished that one should dare to make a Venus a vile courtesan and a frightful bacchante, even in Rome, where Venus had so many temples and statues, being as it were the grandmother of the Roman people (*saltatur Venus et per affectus omnes meretriciae vilitatis impudica exprimitur imitatione bacchari*).

Christianity, in proscribing all the theatrical games, had less in view comedy than it did the dance, with which it associated all sorts of Prostitution. "The dance," as Lucian says, in his dialogue on this voluptuous art, "goes back to the cradle of the world and was born with love." Lucian reports, on this subject, a Bithynian fable which would have it that Priapus, charged with the education of the infant Mars, had completed that education by means of the dance rather than by military exercises, in order to develop at once the physical forces and the bellicose character of his pupil. That is why, according



to the moral of this allegorical fable, the tenth part of Mars' spoils in war always go to the profit of Priapus. The Fathers of the Church did not find in this warlike origin an absolution for the erotic dance. The truth is, for a long time, the Pyrrhic and other martial measures had been no longer danced, those measures which had once exalted the courage of Lacedaemonia, and which had intoxicated Greece with the sound of bucklers; the religious dances in themselves appeared cold and mute. But everywhere, in the theaters, in the gymnasia, at the feasts, lascivious dances and mythological pantomimes had been introduced. This was a craze with the old men, as well as with the young; neither grew tired of watching the antics of the dancers, from the rising to the setting of the sun (*ab orto sole ad occasum*, says the translation of St. Basil, Hom. IV., *ad Examer.*) These dances excited a sort of delirium in the ranks of the spectators, who, even though they may have been bald and may have worn a long white beard, nevertheless beat time upon their seats and gave vent to shameful acclamations in applauding the dancers, those vile creatures, those degraded men and lost women, branded by the Roman law with infamy. It is thus that Lucian pictures for us an old philosopher among the courtezans and debauchees, shaking his white head and trembling with pleasure at the sight of a wretched effeminate, unworthy of the name of man. "You are going to take your place in the orchestra," says Crato, to his ward Lucian, "there to intoxicate your ears with song and with the sound of the flute and to charm your eyes with the sight of an infamous one, who, clad in a luxurious costume and swaying to lascivious melodies, imitates, in all their excesses, the passions of certain shameless women, such as Phaedra, Parthenope, Rhodopis, gesticulating all the while to the dying sounds of the lyre, and to the noise of feet which mark the time!" Lucian, who takes sides with the dance, and who proclaims it useful as well as agreeable, still cannot refrain from speaking of the *gymnopediae* and other Greek dances, in which nude virgins and children took part: "The dance," he says, "must paint manners and passions from the life. . . The dance has no limitations; it embraces everything; it is a spectacle which combines all the others,—instruments, rhythm, measure, voices and choir." Thus may be explained the supreme influence which such an art exercised over senses always ready for pleasure; thus may be explained, at the same time, the reasons of the Christian bishops in so endeavoring to stifle the irresistible seductions of the dance.

It would take too long to mention here all the different varieties of theatrical or convivial dances which called for the austere vigilance of the Church, and which impressed the latter as bearing the special imprint of Prostitution; we have already indicated more particularly those which recall some mythologic fact concerning the loves of Olympus. The best known and least decent were the dances of Venus, the *Aphrodite*, a sort of licentious epic, composed of a horde of pantomimic scenes, accompanied by obscene chants and intoxicating music. The entire story of Venus and her innumerable adulteries was reproduced with a shameless verity, which led the poet of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Art of Love*, the voluptuous Ovid, to blush at finding his verses translated into erotic movements, gestures and postures. *Scribere si fas est imitantes turpia mimos*, he remarked, astonished at the license of such tableaux. Athenaeus gives us the names of a certain number of dances of the same sort, which he does not describe, but which he characterizes as being more or less indecent. Such were the *Epiphallos*, which descended in direct line from the Phallic festivals and games; the *Hedion* and the *Heducomos*, which were dances mingled with lubricious songs; the *Brydalica*, originally of Laconia, and which was danced by women who wore ridiculous and monstrously indecent masks; the *Lamptrotera* in which the dancers, utterly nude, provoked one another by libertine remarks; the *Strobilos*, or the hurricane, which lifted the robes of the actors above their heads; the *Kitharis*, or the harp, an immodest dance of the Arcadians; the *Apokinos*, which consisted in a prodigious shaking of the haunches;\* the *Sybaritike*, which completely justified its name; the *Mothon*, or the slave, which permitted many liberties; the *Ricnoustai* and the *Diaricnoustai*, which included many shakings and titillations of the body, etc. The learned Meursius has composed a volume of dissertations on the dances of the Greeks, and he is far from having exhausted this subject, in so far as the dances of love are concerned.

The Romans had improved still further on the luxury and impudence of these dances, which were staged without veils in the theaters, and which favored the corruption of manners. Each dancer who was in the vogue invented his or her own dances and gave them his own names; it is thus that Bathylle, Pylade, Phabaton, and other celebrated pantomime artists became the creators of various dances which yielded nothing in point of lasciviousness to those of Greece

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. some of our modern jazz dances: the "shimmy," etc.

and Egypt. But the dance most esteemed at Rome, and the one which best reflected the Romans, was the *Cordace*, which owed its success to a marvelous shaking of the loins and buttocks. Seneca complains of the fact that this libidinous dance had been introduced on the stage (*Nat. Quaest.*, I., I., Chapter 16). It would appear, from the etymology of this Greek dance, that the first dancers were in the habit of suspending themselves from a cable and balancing themselves in the air in many clownish and indecent postures. This was a traditional reminder of those *oscilla*, which were a feature of the festivals of Bacchus, and which sometimes assumed singular forms.

Nearly all the theatrical dances called for an incredible agility of body and an extraordinary suppleness on the part of the bodily members. The dancers were all, more or less, equilibrists and acrobats. In the *Banquet* of Xenophon, we behold a little danseuse who makes a backward turn by bringing her hands to her head, while a buffoon makes the same turn in the opposite direction, to the sounds of the double flute. The dancers indulged in so many disorderly movements that they sometimes would drop from lassitude as a result of their exertions. From the most remote antiquity, the male dancers were nude, some laden with indecent amulets, others smeared with saffron, some simulating the feminine sex, others augmenting the proportions of their own sex, all with the head and neck shaved, and many wearing the petasus as a sign of effeminate manners. This customary nudity of the coryphées of the dance contributed particularly to its shameful character. A fresco of Herculaneum represents an infantile dancer of the feminine sex, wholly nude, doing her turns in the hands of a male flute-player, who is seated at the foot of a festal couch where two guests are becoming mutually thrilled at the sight of this lubricious spectacle. Suidas mentions another nude dance, in which the actors suspended from their loins, or even from their necks, enormous red-colored kidneys having the aspect of the *oscilla*, and taking on, at each movement of the dance, an immodest appearance. (See the passages of Suidas, in the *Treatise on the Theatre*, by Boulanger, I., I., Chapter 52).

It is wholly natural that the mercenaries who lent themselves to such sports of Prostitution should have been branded and included in the class of *meretrices* and *cinaedi*. Thus, in the first centuries of the Latin theater, the actors who so exposed themselves to public contempt, were not only excluded from the rank of citizens, but might

also be driven out of Rome by order of the censors. During this period of censorial decency a man was not permitted on the stage in the costume of a woman, and the difference in sex on the part of the actor was established in the eyes of the spectator only by the special character of the theatric mask. But notwithstanding the decisions of the magistrates, theatric immorality had broken all bounds, and Prostitution had been installed as the queen of these gatherings. With certain exceptions, depending upon the talent of the individual actor and his personal character, everyone who took part upon the stage was infamous. The applause of the populace merely consecrated this infamy. Among the actors were to be found only eunuchs, *cinaedi*, *spadones* and other accomplices in unnatural debauchery. Among the actresses were but prostitutes and others of their kind. Arnobius expresses himself on this point with an energy which a most exact translation cannot equal; he is speaking of the corrupting effects of music and pantomime: "These women," he says, "become prostitutes, harp-players, and musicians of other sorts in order to give their bodies to an ignoble traffic and advertise their ignominy in front of a populace which is their own property; they are prompt to throw themselves into the lupanars or to seek adventure under the vaults of the theater, refusing no impurity and offering their mouths for purposes of debauchery: *In feminis fierent meretrices, sambucistriae, psaltria, venatiae ut prosternerent corpora, vilitatem sui populo publicarent, in lupanaribus promptae, in fornicibus obviae, nihil pati renuentes, ad oris stuprum paratae.*" And yet, it was among these dishonored women that Christianity recruited its martyrs and its saints.

The founders of Christianity had sensed the necessity of openly attacking the pagan theater in order to accomplish a reform of manners; they combined all their forces, employed all their authority, all their eloquence against this formidable enemy, which defended itself with the powerful arms of sensuality, of pleasure, and of Prostitution. For more than six centuries, the theater sustained these assaults, and it was not overthrown until after the last altars of polytheism had fallen. Prostitution, however, was not crushed in the débris.



## CHAPTER XXXVII

IT REMAINS for us to examine the influence which Christianity exercised over Roman jurisprudence and the decrees of the emperors from the point of view of Prostitution. This notable influence, emanating from the Councils, did not depart from the doctrine of those Councils, and all the Christian emperors, from Constantine to Justinian, applied themselves to restraining Prostitution within the narrowest limits, under the closest surveillance, without endeavoring to suppress it entirely and thereby compromise the security of social life. There is no doubt, then, that the emperors had been directed in this work by the enlightened reason of the Fathers of the Church, who admitted the existence of Prostitution in the State as a necessary and incurable evil, as a social sore that was not to be cicatrized, but which was to be, merely, kept out of sight and kept from spreading. But on the other hand, in accordance with the same system, they sought to destroy the evil, in principle, by prescribing the most rigorous penalties for all forms of *lenocinium*. We may thus sum up the object of Christianity in its attempt at a reform of public manners through imperial legislation: to stop the progress of Prostitution, and to diminish and circumscribe its domain, by doing away with all the filthy parasites, leaving Prostitution to exist as the despised recourse of a few perverse beings, in the effort to render it, if possible, still more shameful and degrading by drawing between it and decent life a line of demarcation as deep and well-defined as possible.

But before taking up what we shall call the Christian policing of Prostitution under Constantine and his successors, we must first treat of a related subject and one which deserves to be studied in itself. We wish to speak of the vectigal, or lustral tax, which prostitutes in the Roman Empire paid from the time of the reign of Caligula, who had established this tax. It is a remarkable fact that this scandalous tax on social depravity continued to exist to the time of Anastasius I., and that the Christian emperors prior to this Prince consented to soil their hands by taking gold from this immoral source. It is true that they evinced a desire to purify this infamous revenue by devoting it to pious and useful purposes, including a house of refuge for penitent prostitutes. The tax on Prostitution in antiquity

is a fact all the more interesting for the reason that we see it reappearing in more regular and less arbitrary forms in modern times, under a system supposed to be founded on morality and religion.

The Romans gave the name of *vectigal* to every species of impost drawn (*vectus*) from the substance of the people who contributed it. Everything was a suitable object of taxation; but it does not appear that Prostitution had been taxed before the time of Caligula, who ordered that each prostitute should pay into the treasury the eighth part of her daily gains (*ex capturis*), which tended to institute a graduated tax that rose or fell with the fortunes of Prostitution. We do not credit, however, the distinction which Torrentius, the learned commentator of Suetonius, believes to have been established between the night work and day work of prostitutes, by saying that only those who work by day were put into the same class with street porters, by being subjected to the imperial tax. The word *captura* does not bear out this distinction, which is much too subtle, and Caligula was not so innocent as to deprive himself thus of the best part of his underworld revenues. This was not all; Caligula, in order to increase still further the income from this tainted source, decreed that all men or women who had been *meretrices* or *lenones* should contribute to it; but Suetonius does not inform us what was the precise nature of this law, which, undoubtedly was not fixed or permanent, since marriages were also affected by a law of the same sort (*nec non et matrimonia obnixia essent*). The object of this tax was certainly not to moderate the abuses of Prostitution by rendering them more onerous. It was, on the contrary, a *prima facie* guaranty of tolerance on the part of the authorities toward the agents of public depravity. It is a far step from this to the prohibitive laws of Tiberius, who exiled or deported patrician prostitutes and equestrian debauchees, in order to punish the former for having sought registration on the lists of courtezans and the second for having dared to appear on the stage or in the arena. The tax established by Caligula was not abolished until following reigns, but the amount of the assessment and the form were changed a number of times, in order to make it yield still more and to render subject to it as large a number of persons as possible.

We have seen that the execrable Heliogabalus, in order to increase the income from Prostitution, had conceived the idea of opening lupanars in the palace itself and of raising arbitrarily the prices in

these imperial lupanars, to which came matrons and Roman knights, anxious to contribute to Caesar's revenues. But the tax on *meretrices* was no longer standardized, and the collectors charged with raising it would fix the amount according to their own caprices, or according to the fortunes of the individuals concerned. Xiphilinus employs a Greek word, similar to the *captura* of Suetonius, in describing Helio-gabalus' lupanars: *chremata te par auton sonelege kai egaurounto tais empolais*. The tax on Prostitution, the *meretricium*, included levies of all sorts on anyone who made a profession of debauchery, whatever his sex, age or rank might be; the lenons, male and female, were not overlooked, and the children brought in larger revenues than the women did, because they were more numerous. This shameful impost, by way of distinguishing it from the numerous other *vectigalia*, was known from then on as the *aurum lustrale*, either from the idea that the tax was in the character of an expiation or equivalent to a purification for an obscene deed, or, what is more likely, by allusion to the intention of the tax itself, which was especially aimed at those lupanars known as *lustra*. The raising of this tax must have been very difficult, and the collectors in charge must have been armed with sufficient authority to enable them to combat the ill-will of the degraded creatures placed under their surveillance. Otherwise, it is certain that no ignominy attached to those who filled this unpleasant public office; for we find, in the *Inscriptions* of Gruter, No. 347, the epitaph of an agent of this sort, who is described thus: P. AELIO T. F. AVRI LVSTRALIS COACTORI.

The lustral tax brought in too much gold to the public treasury for it to be readily abandoned. But Alexander Severus, who had a horror of money from so infamous a source, decided that it should be still further purified by being employed for foundations of public utility; and so he applied it to the restoration of the Theater, the Circus, the Amphitheater, and the Stadium, to the end that these monuments, devoted to the pleasures of the people, might be supported at the expense of Prostitution. (*Lenonum vectigal*, says Suetonius, *et meretricium et exoletorum, in sacrum aerarium inferri vetuit*.) Lampridius, in recording this respectable reform, which marked the reign of Alexander Severus, adds that this austere and virtuous prince had conceived the thought of doing away entirely with public debauchery (*habuit in animo ut exolateos vetaret*); but the Emperor feared that this measure would lead to an outburst of individual

passions, "for the reason that," says the historian of the Caesars, "men desire in a more lively fashion that which is forbidden them, and when it is forbidden, conduct themselves with a sort of fury." And so, while Alexander Severus diminished all the other taxes (*vectigalia*), reducing them to the thirtieth part of what they had been under Heliogabalus, we must believe that he left unaltered the tax on Prostitution. This tax underwent various modifications, with respect to which it is impossible to be chronologically exact. Under the Emperor Philip, who made no attempt to conceal his Christian inclinations, masculine prostitution ceased to pay a tax, being entirely abolished in principle, if not in fact, by imperial edict. (See Lampridius, Chapter 23 of the *Life of Alexander Severus*.) Later, the immodest lustral tax was only paid every five years, like the other taxes on trades and persons. It had by then come to be termed the *chrysargyrium*,\* a word formed from the Greek and including the two words, *chrysos* and *argyos*, *gold* and *silver*, no doubt due to the fact that some paid for their infamous industry in gold while others did so in silver, as well as to the fact that the tax was not an equal one for all, although the underlying motive was the same.

We do not possess, otherwise, any definite information as to the quotas of this lustral poll tax, which was exigible at the beginning of the fifth year under this species of contract entered into between the State and the agents, direct or indirect, of Prostitution. The payment of the tax was, in a manner, an authorization to practice the scandalous trade for which it served as a sort of patent, if it is possible to describe a fact pertaining to antiquity in these modern terms. The lustral privilege was thus limited to five years in order that those who trafficked in Prostitution might be able always, before the expiration of the period, to declare that they had abandoned their ignoble trade with the object of returning to a respectable mode of life. The collection of the *chrysargyrium* was entrusted to certain officers of good character who were charged with seeing that the tax was properly levied and that the funds were properly returned to the public treasury. These officers bore the title of *lustrales*, as we see from an inscription in the collection of Fabricius: PRIMIGENIO LVSTRALI AVGG. N. N. ALFIA VERECVNDINA PATRI PIENTISSIMO. This inscription, which must date from the fourth century, shows us the first supervisor of the lustral tax, or rather the

\*Translator's Note:—The word occurs in Greek with the sense of *gold-mine*.



first *lustralis* of the Empire; but it does not name him, merely describing him, in the name of his daughter, as a very tender father, *patri pientissimo*. The name of the daughter of this collector deserves to be remarked: Verecundina was equivalent to *modest*, and such a name may be taken as an attempt to justify the equivocal position of a girl who had been reared in such an environment. We do not believe it is necessary to seek the origin of the word, *lustralis*, in the five-year period during which Prostitution had nothing to pay in to the treasury; Ulpianus would employ the word in the sense of *quinquennial* (*lustrum*) without depriving the term of its primitive significance, that of a species of expiatory penalty.

Zosimus, the Greek historian, who is very prejudiced against the Christians, bitterly reproaches Constantine the Great with having inflicted a new tax upon the prostitute; for the word *chrysargyrium* does not appear to have been employed until about this period; but Zosimus furnishes no proof to support the accusation which he directs against the morality of the Gospel itself, by attributing to the first Christian Emperor the creation of a scandalous and corrupting tax. It is certain that this tax had existed from the time of Caligula, and that it had never been abolished, being subjected merely to certain regulations. Constantine had conceived the project of suppressing at once the tax and that indecent official tolerance which was the pretext for it; he published new edicts with reference to the *lustral collection*, which included all sorts of taxes, levied on all sorts of commerce, and he permitted the lenons and the courtezans to exist on condition that they pay into the treasury a part of their receipts. This was to wink at an abuse contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and even to that of philosophy, but it was not to create or approve that abuse, which was not reformed, in part, until the reign of Theodosius the Younger. From the second century, philosophers had been protesting their indignation against this odious tax, which assured an impunity to debauchery, and which gave to the vilest acts the seal of governmental approval. Justinian, in his *Apology for the Christians*, written in the middle of the second century, energetically accuses the emperors of receiving the tribute of Prostitution. "As the Ancients," he says, "raised great herds of cows and goats, so we in the same manner today raise up children destined to infamy, and easy-going women (*muliebre patientiam*, according to the Latin translation), and this throng of women, of *Cinaedi* and

of *Fellatores* with impure mouths (*apicorum spurco ore*) continue to pay in the revenues which you are shameful enough to accept!"

It was Theodosius II who in part carried out Constantine's projects, suppressing the tax on lenons in the lustral collection; he could not have preserved this tax and thus have protected the lenocinium. In placing an end to this hideous commerce, and in proscribing it under the severest penalties, he did not pardon the carelessness of his predecessors, but loudly reproaches the latter, in the *Prolegomena* to his novella *De Lenonibus*, promulgated in 439: "Our too tolerant forbears have let themselves be circumvented," he says, "by the damnable cleverness of the lenons, who, under pretext of a certain lustral payment, have been authorized to ply a trade in corruption and debauchery (*ut, sub cujusdam lustralis prestationis obtentu corrumpendi pudorius liceret exercere commercium*)." In this same novella, the emperor wants to know whether the lenons are to be permitted to live in the capital of the Eastern Empire, and whether the treasury must be enriched by the product of their infamous industry (*aut eorum turpissimo quaestu aerarium videretur augeri*). Theodosius thus omitted the lenons from the lustral collections; but he did not exempt the courtezans, who remained the tributaries of the treasury. The *chrysargyrium* continued to be exacted with much severity from all those concerned with the commerce under any head; but the lenons and the young debauchees were no longer included in the recension which took place every four years, and not, as prior to the reign of Constantine, every five years. This recension was carried out very scrupulously in all quarters and in all houses, each inhabitant being forced to justify his means of existence in the eyes of the Emperor. Those who were unable to pay the tax on account of their extreme poverty did not escape ill treatment on the collector's part. Zosimus informs us that the levy under Constantine was made with so much rigor that mothers sold their children and fathers prostituted their daughters in order to pay the *chrysargyrium*, the most onerous and the most unjust of all the taxes.

Historians are not in accord among themselves as to the application of this tax, which affected more than the agents of urban Prostitution, and which had ended by becoming annual in place of quadrennial. Cedrenus, however, who in the eleventh century compiled his *Universal History*, based upon chroniclers who are today lost, takes care to explain from his point of view the nature of the *chrysargyrium* as

it existed at the end of the fifth century. "Every mendicant," he says, "every prostitute (*porne*), every repudiated woman, every slave, every freedman, all paid a certain revenue to the treasury. A levy had also been made on mules, apes, mares and dogs, whether in the city or the country. Man or woman, each individual subject to the tax, paid in a piece of silver. A similar sum was demanded for each horse, each bullock and each mule, but the ass and the dog were not taxed, except at six oboles a head." Cedrenus seems to forget in this nomenclature, the merchants of all sorts (*negotiatores*) who were affected, more or less, by the *chrysargyrium*, and who are designated collectively in the decrees relative to the lustral tax. All the historians are unanimous as to the harshness of the collectors, whom they picture, moreover, as high personages, honored with the Emperor's special confidence. Cedrenus says, on this subject, that one immense groan arose from the city, the suburbs and the neighboring country, at the moment the fiscal tax was placed in the hands of an implacable army of collectors, resembling a cloud of grasshoppers. It would appear, nevertheless, that the prostitutes and their vile escorts had more to suffer than all the others subject to the tax, probably for the reason that the levy was exacted of these poor wretches with less official control, being subject only to the mercy of the officers of the treasury. Evagrius, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Book III., Chapter 39), tells us that a search was made for courtezans and debauchees in the lupanars and in the wine-shops; that trickery and violence were employed to convict them of the fact of prostitution, and that they were not given the liberty of using their bodies until after they had been given an official card (*charta*) which indicated their vile trade and the amount of the lustral tax.

It was reserved for the Emperor Anastasius to accomplish a reform which the Christian Church had been demanding for centuries, and which Constantine the Great had not been able to effect, despite his good will in the matter. Such is the evidence of an anonymous writer, author of a work entitled *De Synodis*, who is quoted by Ducange in the latter's *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Graecitatis*. Evagrius gives us a curious account of the abolition of the *chrysargyrium* by Anastasius, at the beginning of the sixth century. "This execrable tax," he says, "was an outrage to God, a shame to the Gentiles themselves and an affront to the Christian Empire, since it authorized infamies, in the shameful lucre of which it shared."

The collectors in charge of the *chrysargyrium* were, however, honorable men, who, after growing rich at the expense of vice, filled most important offices in the State, without blushing at the outrages which their agents had committed in their name and under their authority. Anastasius was aware of all the horrors accompanying the lustral collection, and resolved at once to put an end to this scandal. Vainly did a clever man, named Thucydides, endeavor to take up the defense of the *chrysargyrium*, and to prove that it was as just as it was necessary. Anastasius denounced him as immoral and iniquitous before the Senate and abolished the tax by law, ordering that the books of the collectors of and speculators in the tax be burned. The latter vowed that they would soon procure the reëstablishment of the *chrysargyrium*, and proceeded to bide their time until a new reign should set up this assessment once more, with the aid of the original charters which they had preserved or which they knew where to find at need. But Anastasius, warned of their hopes and their projects, determined to strike one last blow.

He feigned to regret the precipitancy with which he had acted, in depriving himself of so productive a source of public revenue; he loudly accused himself of imprudence, and lamented the fact that he had not listened to the advice of Thucydides, who had besought him to respect a tax which the Emperors from the time of Caligula had looked upon as the backbone of the treasury. Could it be that this gold was not purified by the use which was made of it, when it was applied to the expenses of the army or of religion? Anastasius thereby indicated his intention of reëstablishing the impost. He summoned before him the collectors of the *chrysargyrium* and declared that he repented of having impoverished the State by suppression of the lustral tax. All present rejoiced at seeing the Emperor in such a frame of mind, and they intimated that it would not be impossible to collect the charters and original documents which constituted the records of the treasury. Anastasius congratulated them on their zeal and encouraged them to spare no pains in assembling all the documents which were still in existence. The *chrysargyrium* speculators hastened to obey, and went forth to seek the documents, while desolation swept the tribe of prostitutes who had but recently been delivered from so odious a servitude. No explanation was given of the motive which had determined the Emperor to rescind an act which had been approved and applauded by all true Christians. It was



known that the monks of Jerusalem had sent to Constantinople a deputation charged with soliciting, in the name of the Church, the abolition of the *chrysargyrium*. These monastic envoys had been received with much regard by the Emperor, who had also been greatly interested in the performance of a Greek tragedy in which Timothy of Gaza, not less known for his wisdom than for his character as a poet, had portrayed the abominations of this tax which was one worthy of Caligula, its creator. Anastasius kept up his dissimulation until the original charters had been diligently delivered to him by the collectors. "Are these all?" he demanded of the first *lustralis* of the Empire. Upon receiving an affirmative response from this officer, he caused to be published, to the sound of trumpets, a proclamation to the effect that the people were invited to repair to the Circus, there to witness a spectacle which had never been seen before, and which they would never see again. The people did not fail to respond to such an appeal as this. All the charters authorizing the tax having been piled in the center of the Circus, a herald announced to those present, that the *chrysargyrium* had been condemned to the flames as impious and infamous. All the documents, the short of it is, were burned, to the acclamations of the multitude, and the cinders from this mass of papyri fell upon the heads of courtezans and lenons.

It would appear, however, that the *chrysargyrium* was not completely annihilated in the flames, and that it was resurrected under another form, in such a manner as to furnish still, considerable sums to the public treasury. It existed under the reign of Justinian, who, however, avoided specifying it in the regulations governing the collections of taxes (*De exactoribus tributorum*, C. Just., Book X., Section 19). Justinian also does not mention it in his novella against the lenons, who had reared their heads once more. It might be supposed that the women alone had been included in the tax on legal Prostitution, where there figured no longer, at least ostensibly, the agents of debauchery. We shall remark that Justinian is more indulgent than Theodosius toward Prostitution and toward the unhappy wretches who practiced it; he revokes the Roman laws, by virtue of which it was not permitted citizens to marry women of the theater, who had thus been branded with infamy; he himself had wedded Theodora, formerly famous among the prostitutes, daughter of a courtesan of low degree, and worthy of the lessons which she received from her mother; Justinian had covered with the imperial mantle the defile-

ments of this female mountebank, who had promenaded her beauty from city to city before mounting the throne of the empresses. But Justinian always remembers that his wife had been a popular favorite, and that she had been expelled by the magistrates, who had accused her of corrupting the youth. Theodora herself, it is possible, had not forgotten, and it may have been in order to expiate the excesses of her youth that she had founded a refuge for her former companions. It is probable that this pious foundation, suggested by reminiscences of her former state, had been built from the income of the lustral tax. Procopius has nothing to say on this point, when he speaks of this new sort of convent in his *Treatise* on the edifices constructed in the reign of Justinian, but we have every reason for supposing that, from the time of Alexander Severus, the product of the *vectigal* had been applied to works of public utility. It was in accordance with the spirit of Christianity to employ the silver of Prostitution in combating the sad effects of Prostitution.\* But Theodora wavered in the execution of her idea, which was to produce happy results when analogous attempts were later made; we shall come upon these attempts frequently in the Middle Ages. This crowned courtesan was so imprudent as to resort to violence rather than persuasion. Five hundred public women were picked up in Constantinople and transported to a former palace situated on the Asiatic banks of the Bosphorus. This palace had been magnificently arranged in order to receive the recluses; there had been assembled there everything that could be gathered together to console the inmates for the loss of their liberty and their former mode of life. The Empress had neglected nothing in order that the penitents might be able to find there an edifying distraction; but these unfortunate beings, deprived of their lovers and their orgies, preferred a prompt death to a solitary life and one lacking in sensual pleasures; the majority hurled themselves into the sea the very first night; and those who remained in their gilded prison died of boredom or of despair. Procopius does not inform us whether Theodora persisted in her attempt at enforced moralization, an attempt which had succeeded so badly. The poor victims whom she had shut up by force would gladly have returned to Prostitution, had they been left free to leave the gloomy refuge which Theodora had provided for them.

\**Translator's Note*.—Cf. the Salvation Army.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE legislation of the Christian emperors altered almost nothing in ancient Roman jurisprudence on the point of Prostitution; this sore, feeding on the body social, could not be cured by repressive laws and rigorous prohibitions. It was necessary, on the contrary, to leave it open and darkly bleeding, as an exhaust for evil passions and obscene vices, since it was a necessity in the prevention of rape, adultery, and the seduction of good women (*ad vitandum*, says Lactantius, *matronarum sollicitationes, stupra et adulteria*, Book VI., Chapter 23). Such was, in all ages, the sentiment of the primitive Church; such had to be, also, the wise attitude adopted by the temporal powers, who almost always based their action upon the advice of the spiritual powers. We have explained how the councils had abstained, with much prudence, from abolishing Prostitution in fact, although they condemned it in principle; we have shown the indirect path which they had followed in arriving gradually at a reform of manners. The Emperors, from Constantine on, pursued a similar cause and continued to attack Prostitution only in its causes and its excesses. That is why, in the codes of Theodosius and of Justinian, we find no special law relating to Prostitution in general, but we do meet, here and there, with a great number of sections which have reference to it, and which were intended to regulate it by imposing upon it more or less restricted limits. There is a complete tolerance for the trade of the *meretrix*, properly so called, which is looked upon as a business, and which pays tribute to the treasury. There is excluded from this trade, under the most severe penalties, masculine debauchery, which had always been a part of it; and finally, Prostitution is confined within its own proper boundaries, being forbidden to spread, from then on, over the vague no-man's-land of *lenocinium*. It is the latter trade which the successors of Constantine are stubborn in pursuing and combatting under all its forms; it is *lenocinium* which the Church denounces to the unplacable rigors of the law, as the very source of the plague of Prostitution.

Thus, under the influence of Christianity, the Roman law was not modified so far as the legal practice of Prostitution was concerned, and the courtesan, as a courtesan, might still invoke the protection

of the magistrates. Ulpianus decides, as a pagan and not as a Christian, that a *meretrix* is to be protected in the matter of all the sums she has received in her character of *meretrix*, providing also that, if she has been guilty of a shameful act in working at her vile trade, she had not shamefully received her salary as a *meretrix*. (*Illam enim turpiter facere, quod sit meretrix, non turpiter accipere, cum sit meretrix*, Digest, XII., Section 5.) This subtle commentary on the character of the prostitute's wage proves that *meretricium* was looked upon legally as a business, subject to police regulations and possessing its own special jurisprudence, the same as any other business. In carrying still further his gloss upon the law, *De condictione ob turpem vel injustam causam*, the jurisconsult declares that the *meretrix* may not claim in a court of justice the execution of a promise which has been made to her in the rôle of a *meretrix*, for the reason that such a promise can only have a disgraceful motive. Finally, we arrive, in this manner, at the conclusion that the *meretrix* makes use of her right as a *meretrix* in receiving, and that she even receives this salary honestly, even though she demands and receives it in a dishonest manner. (*Cod. Justin.*, Section *De legib. L. Non dubium*; Section *De cond. ob turpem*; Section *De donat. ante nupt.*) We shall not be surprised, therefore, at the fact that the jurisconsults, undoubtedly in accord with the Catholic doctors, had effaced in favor of the courtezans that brand of infamy which formerly had been inflicted upon all the agents of legal Prostitution, and that they had seen fit to pause at this strange distinction, which tended to recognize the woman in the prostitute. "The woman of evil life is an indecent person, but she is not infamous, at least so long as she is not taken in a flagrant act of adultery (*meretrix est turpis persona, non tamen est infamis, nisi in adulterio esset deprehensa. L. Si quis a parente*)."

The brand of infamy had existed for the courtezans down to the time of the Christian emperors. Before Constantine, the ancient laws relating to this brand of infamy had been put into effect by Diocletian and Maximian, who were animated by a desire to curb public excesses. These laws forbade citizens of free condition to marry freedwomen whether or not the latter had lived in debauchery; they forbade senators and their sons to contract marriage with patrician women who had given themselves to prostitution. (*Corp. Jur. Ulp.*, Sec. 13; *Cod. Justin.*, Sec. 9, Book IX, Sec. 20, A. D. Leg. Jul. de adult.) Later, the brand of infamy was imposed upon the daugh-



ters of lenons and of the proprietors of lupanars, in order to place an obstacle in the way of scandalous marriages between senators and these women enriched by prostitution. (Cod. Just., Book V, Sec. 5, 1, 7). Moreover, this brand of infamy descended from fathers to their daughters, for the lenons and the masters of houses of debauchery could be punished in no other fashion (1, 1 and 1, 4, Ut praetor, de not. infam.) The Julian law otherwise spared them, at least so long as they were not conscious or unconscious accomplices in adultery. From the time of Constantine, they were hunted out and punished with a rigor which only rendered them more adroit in their business, and which did not give them the desire to cease their horrible trade, more lucrative than that of their unfortunate victims.

Constantine, with one stroke, cut away half of the body of Prostitution, by causing the crime of pederasty to seek the shadows, a crime which up to then had flourished in the light of day, and which had paraded everywhere its troops of *cinaedi* and immodest victims. From then on, that which before had been merely regarded as a form of sensual intemperance became a shameful and guilty act, detested by respectable folk and punishable by human laws. This great reform, which Alexander Severus had already attempted for the honor of morality and philosophy, was supported and sustained by Christianity, which branded with anathema those whom the praetor chastised with corporal and pecuniary penalties. Undoubtedly, prison, fines and dishonor were not an immediate and radical remedy for a spiteful vice which, for so many centuries, had corrupted all classes of society; but at least the government no longer authorized by its silence those infamous habits which are the concomitant of the most brazen form of depravity, and scandal no longer aided the propagation of the evil. As we have demonstrated in the preceding chapter, Constantine did not entirely suppress the lustral tax, but he purified it by forbidding that it be levied thereafter upon unnatural vice or the trade of the lenon, patent or hidden. This was not all. He increased the penalty of the Senate-Consult Claudian against *ingenuae* or free women who abandoned themselves to slaves or to freedmen; for he desired also to extinguish one of the most common forms of prostitution, among the shameless patrician women, who went to choose their robust lovers from the jockeys of the circus and the gladiators of the amphitheatre, when they did not more discreetly find them in their own entourage of eunuchs or of make-believe buffoons.

Constantine had not waited for his conversion to the Catholic faith to combat the relaxation of manners by means of laws which, although extremely rigorous, were barely sufficient to curb public excesses. Among these excesses, the daring and violent kidnapping of marriageable girls had become a flagrant offence; with the multiplication of the convents of women throughout the Empire, these asylums of Christian virginity had come to provide a tempting bait for libertines. The young and beautiful neophytes, who had made a vow of chastity and consecrated themselves to a life of devotion, frequently found, among their relatives and the friends of their families, those who were ready to dishonor them and force them to return to their worldly life. The law *Si Quis*, published the first of April in the year 320, provided that the one who kidnapped a girl, either in spite of herself or with her own consent, should be grievously punished, and that the girl who consented should undergo the same punishment as her ravisher. (Cod. Theod., De Rapt. Virg. vel vid.) This law did not state what would be the penalty inflicted upon the ravisher, leaving in this respect wide latitude to the severity or clemency of the judge. It was the Emperor Constans who was responsible for the uncertainty of the law with respect to the penalty, and who, by a new law enacted in the month of November, 349, ordered that the guilty should be decapitated. The other provisions of this primitive law left nothing in doubt; all was foreseen and provided for with a terrible precision. It was stated that if some friend of the family, if the nurses of the girl or some other person should have advised an elopement, molten lead should be poured in their mouths, in order that this part of the body which had been the instigator to so great a crime, might be closed forever. As to girls kidnapped in spite of themselves, but who had not cried out for aid, they were to be deprived of the paternal and maternal inheritance. In case a ravisher had an agreement with the parents of the kidnapped girl in order to obtain their silence and his own immunity, anyone had the right to accuse him and bring him to justice. The denouncer received a reward, and the parents who were convicted of having endeavored to suppress the complaints or to hide the misdeed were banished to a desert island. The accomplices of the ravisher might incur the same penalty as the ravisher himself; and if they were of servile condition, they might be condemned to the flames.

We may assume that this law did not pertain to other than girls

of the *ingenuae* class, for the kidnapping of freedwomen or of slaves carried with it no penalty other than those damages and interests which the master of the kidnapped girl might claim. Despite the human equality which had been formulated in the Gospel, a woman of servile birth did not possess the same rights regarding her modesty; thus, a law of Constantine exempts from the penalties of adultery mistresses and servant maids of the wine-shops; the implication being that such ones were unworthy of being ruled by the same laws as free citizens. Christianity did not endeavor to mitigate the stigma which attached to service in the taverns, where Prostitution was more in evidence than drunkenness.

To lend one's services to drinkers (*Si vero potantivus ministerium praebuilt*, says the law, *Quae adulterium*), was for a woman the acme of shame and synonymous with Prostitution. One commentator has here raised the question whether the Latin *praebere ministerium* does not signify something other than pouring wine to drink, and whether the drunkards, who ordinarily filled their glasses themselves, did not have need, under more intimate circumstances, of the good will of the wine-shop women. For example, when they snapped their fingers to demand the basin, and when they invoked Bacchus or Hercules Urinator. However this may be, every servant maid in an inn or wine-shop, married or not, was in no wise obliged to observe the laws of modesty, because of the abjectness of her state (*vitae vilitas*). The law of Constantine on divorce also touched upon Prostitution, by making *lenocinium* after marriage one of the causes for repudiation, and by depriving the wife who had practiced it of her dowry and all her nuptial gains (Cod. Theod., Book III., Sec. 16, De repud.). But whatever may have been the efforts of Constantine looking toward the establishment of a Christian police in the Empire, demoralization was general in all classes of that society where the spirit of Polytheism, that is to say, of Prostitution still lived, and Constantinople had lupanars in every street, debauched women and men in every house, while the courtesan plied her trade of an evening about the churches, as she formerly had done at Rome in the neighborhood of the theatres.

The two sons of Constantine the Great, Constantius and Constans, were less impatient than their father about putting a restraint upon the abuses of Prostitution, but they succeeded no better than their father in an attempt to cure that moral leprosy which was a survivor

of paganism. They prohibited the sale of Christian slaves for purposes of public debauchery, and, by the law of July, 343, declared that these slaves, born of Christian parents or newly baptised, could only be purchased by ecclesiastics, or by the faithful, who must certify their religion. This law presents, however, certain obscurities; for we do not know whether the first possessor of these slaves might submit them to the outrages of the lupanar, when his right of proprietorship antedated the Emperor's decree. *Si Quis feminas, quae se dedicasse venerationi christianae legis sanctissimae dignoscuntur, ludibriis quibuddam subicere voluerit ac lupanaribus venditas faciat vile ministerium prostituti pudoris explere, nemo alter easdem coemendi habeat facultatem* . . . It is clear that the proprietorship of the lenons and of the keepers of the lupanars over slaves reputed to be Christians remained intact up to the moment when there came the question of selling them; then only the master of a slave who claimed to belong to the religion of Christ was no longer free to expose this slave for sale in the public market-place, but must find as a buyer an ecclesiastic or some other Christian.

The scholar Godefroy, in his *Commentaries* on the Theodosian Code, explains thus this law, which he regards as an ingenious means of restraining the traffic in slaves and of abolishing little by little, Prostitution; for if the obstinate pagans took a perverse joy in casting into the bad houses those poor Christian slaves whom they had purchased with this infamous purpose in view, those slaves had but to commend themselves to the charity of their brothers in Christ in order to find some good soul who would pay their ransom and who would restore to them the liberty and right of remaining pure. There came to be a pious emulation among the Christians in sacrificing their earthly goods for the redemption of slaves whom the law had assigned to Prostitution. St. Ambrose (Offic. II., 15) says that the Church had more at heart the saving of dishonored women than it did the snatching of men from death. We may understand thus why it was the Emperors Constantius and Constans desired to encourage the ransom of Christian girls, who otherwise would have been condemned by their servile condition to legal Prostitution.

The same Emperors did more than this; they pronounced the death penalty against any man who should commit, under any form whatsoever, the odious sin against nature. It was Christianity that



revived the ancient *Lex Scantinia*, which had not been applied for six or seven centuries. The new law did not specify in a manner clear and concise the nature of the crime, which might be committed in a number of different fashions, and it did not specify the varying penalty which might be applied to these different cases; it was indignantly aimed at all acts of this sort, the punishment being left to the discretion of the judge. "When a man," says the text of this law, "changes his rôle and becomes a woman, abandoning himself to other men (*cum vir nubit in femina varis paratura*), what is to be done in such a case, in which sex has lost its rights, where Venus undergoes an unnatural metamorphosis, and where, finally, one no longer looks for love but finds only infamy? We command that all human laws be evoked and that justice be armed with an avenging gauntlet, in order that the infamous ones who are guilty, or who have endeavored to become guilty (*qui sunt infames vel qui futuri sunt rei*) shall be given over to the most frightful punishment (*exquisitis poenis subdantur*).” Such a law as this in the Roman code was a striking disavowal of all those abject vices which pagan civilization had accepted and even encouraged, but which Christianity rejected with horror, as associated with the worship of the false gods. The text of the law (Cod. Just., Book LX, Sec. 9, A. D. leg. Jul. de adult.) does not impress one as being any too well established, since Alciati proposes to read *in femana viris porrecturam* in place of *in femina viris paritura*, and since the definition of the crime stands in need of a few commentaries to fill a lacuna designedly left by the jurisconsult. This definition is to be found in its entirety in the word *nubit*, which is employed in judiciary as in poetic language to express a general turpitude contrary to natural laws and to the legitimate relations between the sexes.\*

Theodosius the Younger, in codifying the laws of the Roman Empire, did not have the courage to complete this jurisprudence relating to one of the most shameful facts of Prostitution; but he did declare himself the supreme defender of all the victims of *lenocinium*, which he pursued with even more vigor than his predecessors had dared to employ, for *lenocinium* was not an industry practiced

\*Translator's Note:—The primary sense of the Latin *nubere* is to *cover, veil*; the word came to be used particularly for a bride, who *veiled herself* for the bridegroom; hence, *to marry, wed*. The word was then applied by transference to the man, in the sense of *to marry, be married*, and thence came the occasional meaning, *to lie with a man*, a meaning that will be found in Plautus (*Cist.*, I, 1, 45).

for the benefit of the people, but, on the contrary, one incited and sustained to satisfy passions of the great and the rich. Theodosius did not always go back to the source of this industry which he condemned, and he did not dream of punishing those who had provoked it. He deprived of legal rights those fathers or mothers who wished to compel their slaves or their daughters to prostitute themselves. The unfortunate ones who were victims of such violence or of such solicitations had but to call for the aid of the bishops, the judges and the governors, whose duty it was then to put an end to this criminal oppression on the part of fathers or of unworthy masters; in case these latter persisted in their criminal designs, they were to be condemned to exile and to labor in the mines (Cod. Theod., Book XV, Sec. 8, De lenonid.). The law goes on to specify the minimum penalty for professional procurers. But a few years afterwards, the same Emperor and his colleague Valentinian struck a still more decisive blow at Prostitution by abolishing the tax on lenons. Credit for this commendable measure goes to the administrator of the praetorium of Constantinople, the illustrious Florentius, who proposed to the two Emperors the abolition of the infamous tax levied by the public treasury, devoting at the same time his private fortune to supplying the revenues which the state thus lost. The two Emperors, in accepting Florentius' generous offer, insisted upon making mention of it in the novella which they decreed, in order not to lag behind the praetor in noble and pious intentions. This novella (18, De Lenon.) not only abolished the tax on lenons; its object was the indirect destruction of Prostitution, by striking at those persons, male and female, who profited by and who possessed the monopoly of it. "If hereafter," says the text of the law, "anyone, in a spirit of audacious sacrilege, endeavors to prostitute slaves belonging to others or to himself, or free women who have rented out their bodies (*ingenua corpora qualibet taxatione conducta*), the unfortunate slave shall first be given her liberty, the *ingenuae* shall be freed from the impious relations, and then the one responsible for the scandal shall be beaten with rods and driven out of that city which has been the scene of his crime." Magistrates were ordered to see that the imperial decree was rigorously enforced, under penalty of twenty pounds in gold. But this decree, aimed at the entrepreneurs and the merchants of debauchery, had no effect upon the prostitute as an individual, who preserved the privilege of a shameful impunity, and who only had to put in an ap-

pearance before the praetorian or the ecclesiastical police. But when a woman of an evil life came to dwell in the neighborhood of respectable folk, the law authorized her expulsion, from fear that the proximity of this prostitute would corrupt the manners of those about her. (Cod. Just. L. Minae, De episc. obed). This arbitrary expulsion, without any afflictive penalties, merely proves that Prostitution was always relegated to segregated districts, in the suburbs and beyond the gates of cities. The Theodosian Code, which was in force for nearly a century, does not appear to have been modified on the point of Prostitution down to the reign of Justinian, who merely confirmed the majority of his predecessors' laws, and rounded them out from the Catholic point of view. Like Theodosius, he took action against the lenons, and endeavored to frighten the latter by an excess of rigor. He kept up thus the indirect warfare which the Christian emperors had been making on prostitution for more than two centuries. His first novella on the subject is all the more remarkable for the fact that it affords us, in its exposition of motives, a frightful picture of the secret commerce of lenons at Constantinople in the year 535, the date of the promulgation of the law (Nov. 14, Authent. col. 2, Sec. 1, De lenon). This law sums up all the imperial and Christian jurisprudence on the subject of Prostitution, down to the end of the Middle Ages. It is thus useful to know it in its entirety, and we feel that we ought to translate it in its entirety, inasmuch as it is the ground work of similar legislation. Here it is, with a few slight elisions:

"The ancient laws have displayed a horror of the state and name of those who make a commerce of public women (*Lenonum causam et nomen*); many of these laws contain severe provisions against these persons; we ourselves have, for a long time, increased the punishment which awaited these wretches; we have, what is more, made up, by means of other laws, the omissions of our predecessors; and still more recently, when the scandalous disorders which a traffic of this sort had occasioned in our Capital were denounced to us, we did not disdain to give them our attention. We have learned that certain individuals are in the habit of living illicitly, employing cruel and odious means for the purpose of enriching themselves with an abominable lucre, running about the provinces and distant countries with the object of deceiving miserable girls (*juvenculas miserandas*) by promising them slippers and clothing,\* and having taken them with these

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. the modern "White Slave" Trade.

snare (et his venari eas), they bring them back to this prosperous city and establish them in houses which they possess, providing them with a bare existence and a few clothes and then giving them over to public debauchery, themselves taking the profits from this deplorable Prostitution; we have learned, moreover, that they force these sorry victims to subscribe to certain contracts, in accordance with which, during the time which their masters judge it proper to fix, these victims are bound to fulfill impious and criminal functions; these men even demand caution on the part of their victims; and crimes of this sort have become so common that they are countenanced almost everywhere, in this imperial city, as well as in the country beyond the Bosphorus, and, what is still more horrible, these haunts of impurity (*tales habitationes*) have been opened near the churches and the most respectable houses. Finally, in our time, things have come to such a point of impiety and iniquity that decent folk who pity these unfortunate ones would like to rescue them from their vile trade and lead them to a state of legitimate marriage, and yet do not know how to do so. There exist also certain criminals who expose young girls to the perils of corruption before these girls have reached their tenth year, and charitable persons are barely able with much gold to redeem these poor children and enable them to contract chaste unions. The corrupters employ countless ruses, of which no words can convey any idea, and the evil has attained to such a degree of abomination that the places of debauchery which once were hidden away in the most remote quarters of Constantinople are now spread throughout all the quarters and all about the city. A long time ago, some one secretly informed us of this disgraceful state of affairs. Finally, the honorable praetors, charged by us to inquire into this subject, have made to us similar reports; and at once, after having heard them, we have thought it necessary to employ the aid of God to deliver our capital promptly from such a defilement.

“Consequently, we enjoin all our subjects to be as chaste as possible, for chastity, added to confidence in God, alone can elevate the human soul; but inasmuch as there are many frail minds who permit themselves to be led into the sin of lust through artifice, through trickery or through want, we absolutely forbid any commerce in prostitution (*Nulli fiduciam esse pascere meretricem*, a passage which is very obscure), having women in one’s house for purposes of public debauchery (*Publice prostituere ad luxuriam*) or buying them for



any other traffic. We forbid also having them subscribe to contracts in debauchery, demanding cautions of them and doing anything else which may cause these imprudent girls, in spite of themselves, to lose their chastity. It shall no longer be permitted to deceive them by the allurements of fine clothing or rich adornments or by simple offers of support, in order to constrain them to dishonor themselves. We shall not suffer anything of this kind in the future, and we decree by statute upon this point, with all the necessary accompanying provisions, that any contracts of the sort referred to shall be declared null and void. We shall not permit the base lenons to deprive young girls of what they have already given them, and we further decree that they shall be themselves expelled from this prosperous city, as pestiferous citizens, as the destroyers of public chastity, as the corrupters of slaves and free women, as those who reduce the latter to the necessity of selling themselves, and as those who deceive and support these women in the interest of public indecency. We order, therefore, that if anyone hereafter takes a girl to his house, in spite of herself, under pretext of providing her with support, and then appropriates the fruit of that girl's prostitution,\* he shall be seized by order of the honorable praetors of the people of this prosperous city and shall be sentenced to the extreme penalty. For if we have delegated to the praetors the duty of punishing assassinations and thefts of silver, how much more reason have we to charge them with the duty of pursuing the murder and the theft of chastity! If any one lodges in his house one of these lenons and suffers him to carry on his ignoble trade, and does not drive him out as soon as he learns of it, he himself shall be condemned to a fine of one hundred pounds in gold and to have his house confiscated. In case hereafter any corrupter receiving a young girl in his house shall make with her a written bargain for the surety of which this girl shall give a guarantor (*fideijussor*), the corrupter shall not draw any advantage from the obligation of the girl or of that of the guarantor, for the obligation of the former being null in all its parts, the guarantor shall not incur any obligation towards the lenon. The latter, moreover, shall incur, as we have just said, a corporal chastisement and shall be expelled from this great city.

“And now, we would have the women (and we beg them to do so) live chastely and not let themselves be drawn in spite of their own

\**Translator's Note*.—Cf. our Mann Act.

wills into a licentious mode of life, nor let themselves be constrained to do evil, for we hereby prohibit and punish *lenocinium*, not only in this city and its environs, but also in the provinces which belong to this Republic, and above all those which God has joined to our Empire, all the more for the reason that we desire to preserve pure and immaculate the gifts that we hold. We have faith in God, Our Lord, and we believe that our zeal for chastity shall be the glory and strength of our government, and that God shall recompense us according to our works. Rejoice then, Honorable Citizens of Constantinople, in the benefits of this chaste law; later, we shall have recourse to the voice of the Church, in order that you may know our solicitude for you and our efforts to bring about the reign of chastity and of piety, by the aid of which we hope to see our Republic in a state of prosperity."

This splendid law, dating from the consulate of Belisarius, calends of December, 535, was addressed to all the magistrates of the Eastern Empire, along with the order to publish it and to bring it to the attention of all citizens by means of successive proclamations, in order that no one might be able to pretend ignorance with regard to prescriptions of the law. Nevertheless, it was still eluded, and the lenons continued to make a business of Prostitution by taking sureties for the girls who entered into contracts with them. Not only did they demand, always, certain substantial guaranties, but they even forced their dupes to take a terrible oath, which the latter did not dare to break, as the result of which, in order not to perjure themselves, they endured in silence the infamy of their trade. Moreover, the magistrates made no distinction in the character or the purpose of the guaranties; and in order to remain faithful to the letter of the ancient Roman law, condemned every guarantor to keep his obligation, without putting themselves out as to whether or not the obligation was a respectable one. Justinian was forced to add a new law to the former one a few years after its promulgation. This novella (Authent. Collat. V., Sec. 6, Nov. 51), provoked by the complaints of John, Praetorian Prefect, twice Consul and a patrician, branded the shameful trickery which the lenons had conceived in order to abuse their unfortunate boarders, who looked upon themselves as bound by an oath, and therefore, thought that they were but acting piously in keeping that oath at the price of their chastity as though the transgression of such an oath were not more agreeable

to God than its preservation. "As a matter of fact," says the prelude to the law, "if any one has received from another an oath, concerning for example, a murder or an adultery or any other evil action, it shall not be necessary for this oath to be kept, inasmuch as it is shameful, illicit and leads to perdition. As a consequence, he who shall demand an oath of this nature shall be condemned to a fine of ten pounds in gold; and the judge who shall validate such an odious oath shall undergo the same penalty whatever may have been his motives and intentions. This fine shall be paid to the woman who shall have taken the oath, in order to put her in the way of leading a more respectable life (*Ad aliquen bonad figuræ vitam*), and the unfortunate shall find herself thus cleansed of her sacrilege before God and man."

This was not the last legislative measure taken by the Emperor Justinian in order to reform the manners of the Empire, and to repair as speedily as possible the ravages of Prostitution. He did not fail, for example, to see that the ancient legislation regarding public baths was rigorously observed, and he added to it certain moral prescriptions which had for object the removal of all occasions of debauchery. Thus, although the public baths of men were separated from those of the women, he desired that the same separation should exist in the individual baths, and he expressly forbade the two sexes to bathe together, excepting in the case of a husband with his wife. But the latter could not bathe with other men, nor even with children, under pain of being repudiated and being deprived of her dowry. As to husbands who bathed with strange women, they were punished by being deprived of all the property they might expect of their legitimate wives. (Cod. Just., De repud., I, I, et Nov. 22, De nupt.) One might extract from the Justinian Code a number of other provisions having more or less of a bearing on acts of public debauchery, referring indirectly to those circumstances which were reprehensible in the eyes of morality rather than of the law. The influence of the Empress Theodora was by no means pernicious from the point of view of public morals; but the indulgence of the legislator is for the unfortunate victims of Prostitution; for we behold him, on the other hand, seeking out and pursuing with severity the instigators to debauchery.

The successors of Justinian made but few additions to his jurisprudence; they merely increased the penalty for *lenocinium*, which always hid behind the prostitute's trade, and which even risked pun-

ishment in order to enrich itself; as to the *meretrices* they were in reality protected, although closely watched over and subject to rigorous police conditions, especially at Constantinople and in the large cities. Legal prostitution was controlled in very nearly the same manner in the Christian world, which merely "changed face without changing vices," according to the expression of the learned M. Rabutaux, the first historian of Prostitution in Europe.



## CHAPTER XXXIX

IT IS almost impossible to establish, by means of historical induction, the moral character of the Gauls and the Cimbri, who peopled Gaul fifteen or sixteen centuries before the Christian era; we do not even know, definitely, the origin of those savage tribes whom learned historians believe to have come from the north rather than from the east. We are unable to go back to their racial cradle in order to discover their instincts and their habits from the social point of view. We must, therefore, have recourse to hypotheses, to guesses it may be, in order to discover in ages so dark, a few fugitive and indecisive traces of Prostitution in the private life of the Gauls prior to the conquest of Julius Caesar. It is after having reviewed the small number of Greek and Latin authorities who have given us a traditional account of the first inhabitants of Gaul that we are enabled to determine, beyond any doubt, that among this people Prostitution did not exist, and could not have existed under a legal form; but we do find, in Druidic religion, an evident trace of Sacred Prostitution; as to Guest Prostitution, it does not appear to have been mingled with the noble and generous idea which those proud people attached to the cult of hospitality. Nevertheless, the manners of the Gauls among themselves were far from being always austere and irreproachable.

Could Prostitution properly so called have had a regular and permanent existence in a nation which had made of woman a privileged being, a sort of earthly divinity, a living bond between earth and Heaven? Under such conditions, wholly exceptional as they were, the woman did not even possess the right to give or to sell herself to every comer, except under pain of losing her divine halo; the male accomplice in this species of affront to feminine dignity would have been looked upon as sacrilegious. And so, Prostitution was never more than an isolated incident, very rare, and surrounded always with a mystery which the guilty parties, for reasons of safety, kept impenetrable. Undoubtedly there were, among the Gauls and Cimbri, certain women who were vicious through an excess of sensuality or cupidity; there were also men who were of an ardent and libertine nature, and who were not satisfied with those sensual compensations which old and young did not blush to take, by dishonoring each other

out of respect for the feminine sex. But acts of Prostitution were only accomplished far from the camp or the city, in the depths of the forest, under cover of night. There were never prostitutes so-called, who practiced their shameful trade overtly, or who confessed to the practice of it; for the Gauls would have expelled with ignominy the degraded woman who had despoiled herself of her divine character by giving herself over to public contempt. The Germans, who were but brothers of the Gauls, despite their enmities and their mutual warfares, dealt in the same fashion with women surprised in a flagrant act of prostitution or convicted of not being strangers to such an act. These women had to leave the village which they had defiled with their presence, and each member of the tribe would arm himself with a stone to hurl after them. Ordinarily, these wretched ones were permitted to flee, and dared not reappear again, being forced to bury their shame in the woods; and sometimes an unhappy one, felled by the stones as she was obeying the sentence of expulsion, would find the shower of rocks accompanied by a hue and cry and bursts of laughter on the part of all the people. In the minds of the Germans, this punishment was suited to the misdeed; the courtesan who had lived by the gifts of all died under the stones which all hurled upon her with fury, spurred on as the men were by the cries of their wives, who would not pardon in one of their number a forgetfulness of a duty which she owed her sex.

The Celts had, in general, a respect for their wives which excluded any idea of Prostitution. In the majority of their tribes, according to Athenaeus (I, XIII, Chap. 4), young girls freely chose their husbands. It was at a feast given to young men of marriageable age that the parents of a marriageable daughter set her down to make her choice among these suitors, who would relate their high deeds of war or the chase, drinking cider and mead and singing old national and warlike airs. At the end of the meal, the girl would indicate the bridegroom whom she had chosen as the handsomest or bravest, by bringing water to one of the guests to wash himself, according to the expression which Chivalry had adopted respecting this ancient custom. It is probable that this manual ablution represented, in the emblematic language of the Celts, forgetfulness of the past and purity of conjugal life. The married woman exercised a sort of priesthood in the tribe, all the more for the reason that a prophetic genius was attributed to the feminine nature. The Celts were always ready to

see a goddess in the most vulgar woman; woman it was whose advice prevailed in all the assemblages where questions of peace or war were discussed; she it was who interposed in the quarrels and combats that arose from drinking-orgies; she it was, finally, whom all listened to or consulted as an oracle. There was even a Senate of women composed of sixty members representing the sixty principal tribes of the Gauls. And this Senate, the existence of which appears to date back to the twelfth century before Christ, exercised a sovereign government over the Gallic Confederacy. This superiority accorded to the feminine sex did not admit the possibility of organized Prostitution, either secretly tolerated or openly avowed and recognized. Women could not be considered as instruments of pleasure nor impressed to meet the needs of the debauchee.

And yet, the husband possessed the right of life and death over his bride, as well as over his children; and under certain circumstances, he made a cruel use of this supreme right. Thus when he had conceived doubts on the subject of paternity, he would take the newborn at the moment it saw the light and expose it naked upon a great shield of osiers, which he would cast upon the current of the neighboring river. If the current carried the shield with the child to the bank where the mother stood stretching out her arms, this latter had nothing to fear from her husband's jealousy; for the genius of the river had thereby proclaimed the legitimacy of the child and the innocence of its mother. On the contrary, when the child had been submerged beneath the water, as though the river were unwilling to bear the fruit of adultery, the mother had to die in her turn, convicted of having betrayed the conjugal couch, and the outraged husband would kill her with his own hand or push her into the stream which had devoured her child. This terrible test of suspect paternity would seem to prove, however, that the Gallic women were not free from vagaries of the heart and attractions of the senses. Among all the rivers, the Rhine was the most renowned for its aversion to bastards; never did a husband dare question the decrees which this sacred river had pronounced in saving a child. The Emperor Julian reports, in one of his letters, this ancient superstition attached to the Rhine, a stream which the Celts apotheosized. "It is that river with its impetuous current which determines among the Gauls the sanctity of the conjugal couch. Barely has the newborn left the maternal breast, barely has it given its first cry, when the husband takes it; he

lays it upon a shield, and runs to expose it to the whim of the waves; for he is not conscious in his breast of the beat of a father's heart until the river, the judge and the avenger of marriage, has pronounced the fatal decree." Adulteries must have been extremely rare among the Gauls, as well as among the Germans; *Severa illic matrimonia*, says Tacitus; and the husband had no need of demanding justice from a tribunal, for he was at once judge and executioner in his own right.

The Gauls generally had but a single wife; however, the chiefs and the most eminent men of the tribe took a number of wives, not out of libertinism, but as a mark of supremacy (*non libidine, sed ob nobilitatem*, says Tacitus). As a matter of fact, Gaul, covered at that time with swamps and forests, was cold and damp at all seasons, and the temperament of the people who dwelt there resembled this foggy atmosphere, and never grew warm except from intemperance at table. The women, moreover, lived a retired and hidden life, far from the gaze of men, except at the public ceremonies, religious or military, which caused them to leave those retreats reserved for the mothers of families. These women, occupied with their children and their household, caught not even a glimpse of the horizon beyond, but remained faithfully and obediently chained to their harsh husbands. *Nec ulla cogitatio ultra*, says Tacitus, *nec longior cupiditas*. They possessed, moreover, a haughty and independent soul; they would have preferred death to shame, and they would not have been able to bear even their own blushes. It is to be understood that they were good guardians, the ones of their virginity, and the others of their conjugal fidelity, recalling that principle which served as a basis for their morality: "A woman who has given herself to a man cannot go to the arms of another." In accordance with this principle, which regulated their conduct, they did not think it right to contract second marriages. The law, however, did not prevent them from remarrying, notably in certain tribes where custom was determined by the proverbial formula: "A woman who has slept with two men is guilty, if they are both living at the same time." The virtuous Chiomara, cited by Plutarch in his *Treatise on Illustrious Women*, prefers to break the tribal law rather than to permit the one who is the cause of her dishonor to continue living. Chiomara was the wife of Ortia-gontes, chief of the Galatae, or the Gauls of Asia, who were defeated and subjected by the Romans in the year of Rome 565. Plutarch does not tell us whether or not Chiomara was beautiful; but he informs



us that she had been violated by the Roman centurion who had made her a prisoner. She appeared to resign herself to this insult, and when her husband's envoys brought her ransom, she informed them, in the Gallic language, that she also had a ransom to demand. She had the cleverness to trap the centurion who had outraged her, and she had his head cut off by the Galatae, who led her back to Ortiagontes. The latter, to whom she offered the bloody head of the poor centurion, was indignant at a murder committed in contempt of the law. "I have been disgraced," she told him in substance, "but there must not remain living upon earth a single man who can boast of having possessed me."

If adultery was almost unknown among the Gauls, there is ground for believing that Prostitution was even rarer; for adultery outraged but a single husband, whereas Prostitution extended the outrage to all women, who felt themselves equally offended by the misconduct of a person of their sex. The law of the Druids gave women permission to judge their own affairs in a case of this sort. Duclos, who relates this detail in a work on the Druids, adds that, in a treaty concluded between the Gauls and the Carthaginians in the time of Hannibal, it was stated that if a Gaul complained of the conduct of a Carthaginian, the case was to be taken before the magistrate of Carthage; but if it was a Carthaginian who complained, the Gallic women were to be the judges. There existed thus a tribunal of women, whose duty it was to pass judgment in causes involving honor, and in damage-suits. The barbaric peoples were no less sticklers than the Greeks and Romans on one point: of all the insults which might be addressed to a woman, that of *prostitute* was looked upon as the most grave. We shall see later how Rotharis, King of the Lombards, punished with a heavy fine this insult, which appeared to have been all the more frequent from the fact that it was not so commonly deserved. The Gallic women were, then, naturally the judges of anything of an insulting nature pertaining to the person, and they were thus not unaware of the facts of Prostitution. For example, when a Gaul, noble or plebeian, had married, without knowing it or otherwise, a woman of evil life, the women would assemble to make an inquiry regarding the bride's unworthiness. Tacitus had remarked among the Germans this horror of prostitutes, a horror which the Gauls shared: *Non solum senatoribus*, he says, *sed et plebeis hominibus meretrices uxores ducendi jus denegabatur; cum virgines solum duci*

*posse*. These assemblies of women were undoubtedly convoked upon occasion to pronounce on questions of gallantry and sentiment, an institution which was to make its reappearance in the Middle Ages with the Courts of Love.

Hospitality, as we have said above, was better established among the Gauls than among the other peoples, for they looked upon it as a crime worthy of the thunderbolt to close one's door on a stranger or to do wrong to a guest after having received him. The guest became a brother, a friend, a sacred ward; but his first duty was to respect the couch of the man who had received him with cordiality. The Gauls were less jealous of a husband's honor for the reason that they never yielded to the craven concessions of Guest Prostitution. As to Sacred Prostitution, it certainly had no place in the religion of the Druids, a religion wholly metaphysical, embracing the most elevated dogmas of the religions of Egypt and of India, a mysterious cult surrounded with shadows and terror, and one which did not seek to promise material seductions to its priests and worshipers. The Druids were philosophers, the majority of them proved by age, living a communal life in the heart of impenetrable solitudes; they never communicated with the profane except in a few exceptional circumstances, at the solemn festivals, which had in them nothing that was voluptuously attractive, and which often took place to the accompaniment of human sacrifices. The Druids, moreover, were not only the ministers of religion; to them alone belonged the duties of legislation, government and public education; they taught the exact and the sacred or philosophic sciences. Their life could not be as austere as their doctrine, but they took care not to destroy the veneration of which they were the object, by mingling with religious things debauchery or pleasure. They possessed, moreover, in their colleges, prophetesses and virgins who, it is possible, did not confine themselves to serving in the ceremonies of Druidism. These Druidesses, of whom we catch a glimpse here and there in the history of the Gauls, like somber apparitions, were in the habit of hiding away in grottos and in the hollows of aged oaks; they fled at the approach of men and only rendered their oracles at night, to the gleam of lightning, and sound of the thunderbolt and the noise of the storm. Despite the prestige with which epic tradition has clothed the figure of the beautiful and appealing Veleda, the theory may be advanced that these *vaciae* were ordinarily hideous old hags, like the sibyls of ancient

Rome. They seemed to have forgotten their sex, along with all instincts of modesty; for in certain Druidic ceremonies they showed themselves entirely nude, the body rubbed with oil and dyed black, as though to imitate the color of the Ethiopian skin. (*Tota corpore oblita*, says Pliny, in Book XXII of his *Natural History*, *quibustam in sacris et nudae incedunt, Aethiopum colorem imitantes*.) When the Romans, after the revolt of the Iceni in Britain, desired to take possession of the Isle of Man, which was one of the strongholds of Druidism, the women of the island, black as furies, hurled themselves naked, torches in their hands, into the midst of the combatants. The Romans were more frightened at this apparition than they were by the cries and furious resistance of their enemies.

If Prostitution had no reason for being in the higher religion of the Druids, either among their lessons in philosophy and their metaphysical instructions or in their auguries, drawn from the palpitating entrails of a man who had been flayed alive, or through the smoke which arose from a pyre of human victims, enclosed in wicker colossi, we may still suppose with a good deal of probability, that it existed, in fact or in principle, in the lower cult, that is to say, about the savage altars of certain secondary divinities, who had been created by popular superstition, and whom the Druids did not look upon as inimical to their transcendent religion. Among the Gauls, there were undoubtedly certain depraved minds, certain hysteric natures, certain carnal instincts, as there are among any people, although such natures were with them rarer and less brazen in their manifestations. Those who, by way of exception, experienced this call to the senses and a vague curiosity that impelled to debauchery, would evoke, by way of satisfying such an appetite, the shameful pretext of Prostitution. And so, they proceeded to invent gods to whom the sacrifice of virginity was an agreeable offering. They encouraged lust by creating for it sanctuaries, and by authorizing it in the guise of a divine consecration. It is permissible to suppose that among the *vaciae*, whom popular tradition rendered under the name of *fays*, there were those who demanded, when one came to consult them in their retreats, a proof of good will, despite their old age, their ugliness and their redoubtable character. All the wonder-legends of the Middle Ages tell of these strange bargains which the Druidesses concluded with their audacious visitors, who felt that they could never sufficiently pay for the oracles they had received. What was done by these

old Gallic sibyls, degenerate members of the Druidic colleges, was done for their own profit; and they constituted themselves, of their own right, the gods or guardians of springs, rivers, woods, mountains, and stones. They chose their residence in the place where their cult had been established, and there levied an obscene tribute on those imprudent ones, men or women, who traversed their domain, or who approached their stronghold. It was they who guided the lost traveler across the desert, over the rocky peak, through the dangerous defiles; it was they who had barks on the most somber lakes, and who guarded the bridges between precipices. Woe to the young girl whose evil fate placed her at the mercy of these ferocious devourers of young flesh! Our fairy stories are still filled with the distant and disguised echo of the indescribable viciousness of these ogres, gnomes and other genii of the Celtic solitudes. But there is nothing precise or authentic in these weird old legends of sacred Prostitution which have been handed down for so many generations. There is a vast field open to suppositions and conjectures on the subject of the fays and the ogres, who were certainly, in the distant times, the agents of Sacred Prostitution.

We possess only uncertain notions as to the Gallic theogony, and it would, accordingly, be impossible to describe the erotic attributes of those divinities which are known to us only by name. We may presume, however, from the discovery of certain monuments, that these divinities were not often any more decent in their images and in their attributes than were those of Italy and Greece. Thus, the goddess Onouava, whom archaeologists of the seventeenth century confounded with the Mithra of the Persians, was represented by the head of a woman, accompanied by two great spreading wings, two large shells in the form of ears, and two serpents which ran about her body with their tails interlaced. This image was an allegorical representation of pleasure, which flies here and there, which always has its eyes open and its ears closed, and which glides everywhere in order to entwine and devour its prey. Sometimes, she was represented by the head of a woman emerging from a rough stone on which had been engraved a rearing adder. The emblematic serpent played, moreover, an important part in the religion of the Druids, and an idea of happiness was attached to the discovery and possession of a stone fossil, oval in shape and of a white or brown color, which was called the *serpent's egg*. This stone was looked upon as communicat-



ing to the person who bore it a singularly prolific power. The god Gourm was represented with the features of a naked hermaphrodite with the head of a dog. The goddess of physical love, the Gallic name of which was changed by the Romans to Mercia, when they associated her cult with that of Venus, had no other emblem than black stones or granite rocks, carved in the form of a cone and standing upright by the side of the road. The god Maroun (*Marunus*), whom the Romans had travestied into Mercury, presided over journeys into the mountains, especially the Alps; he had the face of a Gallic peasant covered with the *bardocucullus*, a great cape without sleeves, in the form of a monk's cloak or cowl; when this *bardocucullus* was raised, it displayed a phallus mounted on two slippered legs and bound with thongs. It was an idol of the domestic race, like the *Mairs* or the *Norns*, whose mission it was to watch over the birth of children and to dower the latter in their cradles.

As to the manners of the Gallic gods, we do not know enough about them to be able to say whether or not they were more or less defiled by Prostitution. We merely know that the *gaurics*, monstrous giants who were to be met at night in the dolmens and the *pulvans*, especially in Brittany, were in the habit of practicing among themselves execrable debaucheries. We know that the *suleves* (*sulvi* or *sulfi*) were beardless genii with soft and persuasive voices who lay in wait by night for travelers, in order to obtain from the latter shameful caresses, partly by force and partly by intimidation. We know, finally, that the *thusses* and the *dusiens* (*dusii*) came to visit the virgin in her sleep and to take away her virginity, or it may be, to offer to the ardent young man the dream of a night of love, or even to essay their corrupting power on vile animals. "It is an opinion everywhere prevalent," says St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, "that certain demons whom the Gauls called *dusii* are in the habit of making impure attacks upon sleeping persons. (*Hanc assidue immunditiam et tentare et efficere*).” St. Augustine adds that so many folk bear witness to the existence of these debauched demons that one has no right to doubt. The Church, the truth is, admits among the works of the Devil the nocturnal surprises of incubi and succubi, which are wholly of Gallic origin. It is probable that, despite the rigid virtue of the women of Gaul, the demons of desire laid snares sometimes from which these virtuous matrons did not always escape. Thus, Strabo (Book IV) tells us of their passion for jewelry, a passion which was

shared equally by the men, for both sexes adorned themselves with chains, necklaces, bracelets, rings and golden girdles. The most elevated in dignity and the most illustrious by birth even wore diadems, crowns and golden mitres, enriched with precious stones. It may be remarked that, in all ages and in all lands, the art of the goldsmith has been one of the most potent factors in Prostitution.

We have seen, from the example of Chiomara, that conjugal fidelity was one of the customary virtues among Gallic women. Plutarch relates the story of another Galatian woman, named Canna, one of the most beautiful of her nation. The Gaul Sinorix becoming amorous of her and being unable to compel her to yield, either by persuasion or by force, so long as her husband lived, proceeded to kill this husband, who was a Roman named Sinatus. Canna took refuge in the temple of Diana. It was there that Sinorix came to pursue her with a love which she repelled with horror. She, however, forced herself to feign consent to a marriage with Sinatus' murderer; but on the wedding day, she presented him with a nuptial chalice which she had poisoned; after drinking half its contents she handed it to Sinorix. "Great goddess," she cried, turning toward the altar of Diana, "you know how grievous the death of Sinatus has been to me; you are my witness that the desire of avenging myself alone has led me to survive him; I now die content. And as for you, coward," she said to Sinorix, "you who have thought to triumph in the death of my fidelity, no longer seek a couch, but a tomb!" The devotion of Eponine for her husband Sabinus was even more sublime than that of Canna, since it lasted ten years. And yet, these Gauls, who inspired in their wives a tenderness so devoted and so incorruptible, were not always equally reserved on their own account, and frequently did not observe fidelity in its most scrupulous acceptation. The great historian Michelet depicts them for us in his *History of France*: "Dissolute and light, wallowing blindly and by chance in infamous pleasures." In short, if the Gauls respected their wives, they did not respect themselves, and in the manner of the peoples of Italy, they abandoned themselves to the most horrible and unnatural excesses, chiefly at the end of their feasts, where they made an immoderate use of fermented beverages. These excesses were not, as among the Greeks and Romans, the result of over-civilization, a vice of the imagination rather than of the senses; they corresponded to a gross need of incontinence, which awoke under the influence of drunken-

ness, and which was like an exaggerated form of dementia. The feasts, prolonged till late in the night, with Bacchic challenges and bursts of obscene laughter, would terminate in a confused orgy, where, in the darkness, Prostitution would reign. Diodorus Siculus even supposes that the Gauls made use of their concubines in these nights of blind debauchery; following is the Latin translation of the Greek text, which indicates a strange aberration of the moral sense in these Barbarians: *Feminas licet elegantes habebant, nimium tamen illorum consuetudine afficiuntur, quin potius nefarius masculorum stupris, et humi ferarum pellibus incubantes, ab utroque latere cum concubines volutantur. Et quod omnium indignissimum est, proprii decoris ratione posthabitâ, corporis venustatem aliis legissim prostituunt, nec in vitio illud ponunt, sed potius cum quis oblatam ab ipsis gratiam non acceperit, inhonestum sibi id esse dicunt.* The following day, with the return of dawn, each would forget what had passed in order not to have to blush for himself. But in the end, the filthiest bestiality did not even take the pains to conceal itself; and Celts of good race (*ingenui*) came to love their mares and their dogs, the companions of their adventurous warlike life.

Such was the moral situation in Gaul when Julius Caesar established there the Roman domination. The Gauls, of a light and impressionable disposition, so modeled themselves after their conquerors that they soon became Romans, while preserving their own defects and qualities under this servitude. Already they were somewhat Hellenized in the neighborhood of Marseilles (Massalia) and the Phocian cities; but the influence of Rome was more profoundly felt in Belgian Gaul; and all the principal cities, Lyons (Lugdunum), Autun (Augustodunum), Bordeaux (Burdigala), Vienne (Vienna),\* and Paris (Lutetia), soon had only Roman or Romanized inhabitants, especially after the destruction of Druidism and the Druids. There remained, for more than two centuries, certain scattered traces of Druidism; prophetesses were still to be found in the woods; the Norns danced always in the light of the moon and in lightning; but the religion of the Greeks and the Romans was practised by the Gauls with more fervor than it was in the rest of the Empire; legislation had survived religion, and everything in the Gallic regions was fashioned after the Greek and the Roman. We have no special information as to the state of Prostitution among the Romanized

\*Translator's Note:—The French city, of course.

Gauls, but we may with certitude presume that conditions were in no wise different from what they were at Rome and in the Asiatic provinces. The Gallic women merely took care to preserve their self-respect, that proud haughtiness which is their historic characteristic, and they did not provide many opportunities for public debauchery. But foreign women were no more lacking beyond the Alps than they were on the other side, and the governors, magistrates and military chiefs, whom Rome brought into Gaul, brought with them all those refinements of luxury to which they were accustomed. They would not willingly have deprived themselves of their *cinaedi*, of their eunuchs, of their female dancers, of their *citharaedi*, and all the personnel of libertinism. Soon, thanks to the Gallic temperament, there was a recrudescence of convivial lust in togaed Gaul (*Togata*), as there had been in long-haired Gaul (*Comata*), and the feasts of Julius Sabinus at Langres (Andematunum) were in no wise inferior to those of Lucullus at Rome.

Undoubtedly, the metamorphosis which the Roman occupation had wrought in Gaul was less perceptible in the country districts than in the city, but the gods and goddesses of Rome were everywhere received with the same transport. A few of these gods and goddesses shared the preference, as being the best adapted to the character of the inhabitants and the manners of the country. Hercules, Bacchus, Venus, Isis, and Priapus had temples and statues which inspired a host of offerings. The Gaul had instinctively chosen those divinities which were less severe, and those which spoke most clearly to his senses; he had grown tired of the terrifying mysteries, and asked only to be permitted to amuse himself by honoring the new gods whom Rome had brought him. This was a brilliant era for legal Prostitution, and, like all peoples suddenly initiated into the delights of civilization, the Celtic races arrived promptly at the last degree of social corruption. We must read the poems of Ausonius, the venerable professor of Bordeaux (Burdigala), who was the master of the Emperor Gratian, in order to form an idea of the profound demoralization which had taken possession of Gallic society; Ausonius, it is to be understood, does not approve the horrors of debauchery which he lays before the eyes of his reader, but he describes them as a man who understands them for the reason that he has experienced them. The very manner in which he lays them bare is even more obscene than the most energetic passages of Juvenal and Horace. There are here but foetid and



monstrous pleasures which are an outrage to nature; everything which could be invented by the perversity of the senses, everything 'except bestiality, is enumerated and traced in certain epigrams of the Gallo-Roman poet, who addressed prayers in verse to Christ, the truth of the truth, the light of the light (*ex vero verus, de lumine lumen*)! We are astonished, after having perused these pious Christian prayers, that Ausonius should have defiled his mind by describing the lubricious contortions of the famous courtesan, Crispa.

When the Sicambrians hurled themselves from Germany into Roman Gaul, when the Barbarians of the North descended into the most flourishing provinces of the Empire, with their chariots carrying their gods, their wives and their children, they did not mingle with this civilization, which was terrified at their passage, and which seemed to wither at their approach, like a river whose source has dried up. These innumerable hordes spread over all Gaul, threatening to engulf the Gallo-Roman population. The Salian tribe was the last to come, and it sought to settle on the soil already ravaged by so many successive invasions. The Salisks or Salians, that redoubtable family of Franks, which had passed near the mouth of the Yssel, began its settlement in Belgic Gaul in the middle of the fifth century, and advanced from city to city towards Lutetia (Paris). These Salians were handsome and noble, tall in figure, with blue eyes and blonde hair; they had a gentle and intelligent air; although they devastated, pillaged and slew, they did not commit rape. This was due to disdain on their part, rather than to a pity for the vanquished populations. The morals of the Franks remained sometimes intact under the safeguard of their religion and their laws. They would have disdained to become Romans or Gauls, and so preserved themselves from the defilements of Prostitution, which had never penetrated either the temples of Irmisul, their hospitable tents, or their fortified villages. The Salic law did not recognize the courtesan as a member of the Frankish nation.

## CHAPTER XL

THE Franks, whose name does not signify *free* in the Teutonic language, but *proud* and *unconquerable*, just as the Latin word *ferox* corresponds to *frek* or *frenck*, had not accepted, like the Germans and the Gauls, their ancestors, the domination of women, and did not accord any supremacy to this sex, which they judged inferior to their own. This was one of the distinctive characteristics of the Frankish tribe, which made nobility consist in strength of body and in energy of soul. Woman, among these barbarians, who were impatient in war and careless of death, did not find herself surrounded with the prestige and religious respect which had been hers with the Gauls and the Germans from the most remote times; she possessed a consciousness of her own weakness, and so she had nothing to do with the government or public affairs, but remained under paternal and conjugal subjection. Prostitution, of whatever nature, had therefore no reason for being in a society that was ruled by cruel and brutal laws, characterized by warlike habits and ignorant of the corrupting arts of civilization, being indifferent to the pleasures of luxury and disdainful of all carnal misalliances. We shall soon see that if Prostitution sometimes existed, it was always hidden and never avowed.

The Frankish race was divided into two classes of individuals: persons of free condition, the *ingenuae* of the Latins, and the slaves or serfs, *servi*. These latter were probably the descendants of the Saxon or Teutonic population, whom the Sicambrians or Salians had reduced to servitude, and who, after a number of generations, had mingled with their conquerors. However this may be, the separation was profoundly marked between free women and serfs. These latter belonged to a master, while the former belonged only to their parents or their husbands. A woman or girl, married or widowed, never possessed the liberty to dispose of herself; she was, so to speak, under guardianship or in slavery. The whole tribe might demand of her an account of her conduct, when she no longer was responsible to a husband or a father. In this state of permanent submission, the Frankish *ingenuae* had not dared to give themselves to acts of Prostitution, which would have put them in the class with slaves; and the latter, having each his own master and lord, might not prostitute

themselves to all comers without exposing themselves to corporal penalties, and without placing a heavy responsibility on their accomplices. Moreover, in all times, as in all countries, women are but what men make them, and the Franks, despite their ferocious courage, their bellicose ardor and their nervous vivacity, were not greatly inclined by temperament to the satisfaction of the senses. And so, they formed indissoluble unions, the unique object of which was the production of male children; it is easy to understand how with this object in view, they might readily have employed concubines in place of wives; these concubines, as the learned Bouquet expressly states (*History of the Gauls*, Volume II, Page 422), were ordinarily but serfs, who had come by degrees to be honored by the title of wife, through functions of the mother of a family. The Frankish women lived a very retired life in their homes, nourishing and rearing their children, spinning flax and wool, manufacturing fabrics and sewing garments, preparing the couch and the table for their husbands, whom they followed neither to war nor to the chase, neither into the juridical assemblages nor to the equestrian games. They barely dared glance out of their tents, between the surrounding palisades, to learn the issue of the combat, the joust or the chase. They lived among themselves, observing and protecting each other mutually, in such a manner that the very thought of incontinence did not enter their minds.

Nor was there anything in the religion of the Franks to favor Sacred Prostitution. This religion was but a grosser paganism, which had borrowed horrible and monstrous forms from the natural elements, water, fire, earth, the tempest, the moon and the sun. They adored no other gods, and they paid these gods an extravagant homage, accompanied by chants, dances, grimaces, contortions and masquerades. We do not know, otherwise, what was the nature of this religion, which Gregory of Tours describes as senseless (*fanaticis cultibus*), and which has left behind it a number of superstitions in Christianity. For example, in an inventory of pagan practices, drawn up following the synod of Leptines in Hainault in the year 743, notice was taken of the debauches of the month of February (*De spurcalibus in februario*), in which we may find the origin of the modern carnival; we read also in the same inventory: *De pagano cursu quem yrias nominant*. "At the Calends of January," says the Abbé Besroches, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie de Bruxelles*, "the women disguise themselves

as men and the men as women; others, putting on skins and horns, transform themselves into beasts; all run through the streets, howling, leaping and indulging in countless absurd performances." Such was the point of departure for the famous Festival of Fools, which existed in the Christian Church down to the eighteenth century. Finally, this *indiculus* of superstitions, superstitions that impress us as being Frankish rather than Gallic, speaks of women who commanded the moon and who devoured the hearts of men. It was the *striae* or sorceresses whom the Franks looked upon as so redoubtable, and whom they accused of being in communication with the powers of evil. We shall soon prove that these *striae*, who dwelt in the most impenetrable lairs of the forest, there practiced, under benefit of the terror which they inspired, a species of Prostitution, which they also boasted of practicing with their evil genii.

The Franks had no respect for sworn faith (*familiale est ridendo fidem frangere*, says Flavius Vopiscus), and yet, they were the faithful guardians of hospitality, according to Sylvianus. This hospitality implied no commerce of the guest with the wife, concubine or servant of the house; these latter even avoided showing themselves while the host and his guests were drinking out of the same cup, exchanging daggers or bracelets, and playing at games of chance, to end by sleeping in the same bed. The traveler who stopped in a Salian camp or village had no other excuse to offer except the need of rest and the need of satisfying his hunger and thirst in order that he might be in a state to resume his journey the following day. The traveler had no need of finding along the way any sensual recreation, which would have been for him but a cause for fatigue, and which, moreover, did not figure in the program of Frankish hospitality. He demanded nothing more than an escape from the heavy lance and broadsword with which he was only too familiar on the field of battle, and from which he was glad to escape in the generosity of the fireside. Not only did the Frank not demand Prostitution of his wife, his daughter or his slave to the profit of the guest whom he received as a brother and a friend, but he even kept them at a distance, and he did not permit the latter to see a stranger from fear of offending their modesty. The laws of the Barbarians prove to us that they were very jealous of the virtues of their wives, and that they did not suffer the least infraction of this virtue. The husband, father and master possessed the right of life or death over the slave, the daughter and the wife;



an excessive use of such authority was scarcely punishable; for example, a husband who slew his wife in order to wed another did not incur any penalty, according to the ancient capitularies, other than being deprived of bearing arms (*armis depositis*). A woman slain for the crime of adultery was merely a matter of general law, and this law knew neither relaxation nor hesitation; sometimes the husband did not wait until the crime had been committed, but would give satisfaction to his jealousy before knowing whether it was well founded or not. The capitulary contents itself with disarming a Frank who has slain his wife without good reason (*sine causa*).

We shall not insist too much upon one obstacle which was opposed to the practice of Prostitution. A woman never belonged to herself, even in becoming a widow. If she was no longer responsible to her parents, her husband or her children she remained in a manner subject to a communal servitude, attached to the common soil, and everyone had, so to speak, the right of watching over her morals. If this widow desired to remarry, she had to pay a sort of tax or ransom to the nearest relative of her former husband, or to the treasury of the prince or king whom she recognized as lord. This revenue was but three sous in gold and one denarius (*Lex sal.*, Section 46, *Reipus*). The law of the Burgundians states that a widow who shall have voluntarily entered into a criminal liaison with a man (*quod si mulier vidua cuicumque se non invita sed libidine victa sponte miscuerit*), shall not be able to claim any damages nor to constrain her accomplice to marry her, for the reason that Prostitution has rendered her unworthy of having either a husband or pecuniary damages. The same law accords to the daughter of a free Burgundian, who shall have been seduced by a Barbarian or by a Roman, the right of claiming fifteen sous in gold from her seducer as payment for her deflowered virginity; but in the end, this girl remained branded with infamy as a result of the loss of her honor (*illa vero facinoris sui deshonestata flagitio, amissi pudoris sustinebit infamiam*). These fifteen sous in gold which the seducer was required to deliver to his victim or his accomplice represented the price of prostitution and the girl who dared to claim it put herself in the same class with the courtezans. It appeared, nevertheless, that the legislation of the Barbarians, while imposing slavery on the feminine sex, still recognized the fact that a girl who had not yet known a man had some little interest of her own in the body which she surrendered to her husband. For the latter,

according to the old customs of the Salic law, did not contract marriage with her until after he had presented her with a sou and a denarius, by way of paying for her virginity at the standard price. This nuptial practice is preserved to our day, although given a Christian interpretation, in the *pièce de mariage* which the bridal couple have blessed by the priest with the ring. This sou and this denarius which the woman received when she was married constituted the price (*praemium*) which she might demand on her own account, the payment of which, although frequently non-voluntary, purchased her good will; she did not possess, otherwise, either land or income or the right of succession. The dowry which the husband owed to the wife whom he married, was but the promise to keep her, and this reverted to the wife's family in case of her death. Ordinarily, the presents which this family received from the future husband represented a sort of bargain in which the wife was but a piece of passive merchandise.\* Marriage, thus contracted by parents or by avaricious masters, was a sort of savage *lenocinium*, in which the woman's wage (a sou and a denarius) was guaranteed by law.

The code of the Barbarians protected women in all cases in which their modesty might receive an affront; but the woman, in order to receive this protection, had to merit it by decent and honorable conduct. We have every ground for supposing that the sorcerers and debauchees did not enjoy the benefits of this protective law and had no title to anyone's respect. One article of the Salic law provided that it was admissible to prove the unworthiness of any woman who asserted she had been offended and who invoked the aid of a judge. This inquiry into the morality of the parties certainly involved that jurisprudence in the matter of insults of which something has been said, and the complaint was sometimes stopped from fear of information and testimony which would come out. Following is the text of the Salic law, from which we believe it may be seen that a damage suit brought by a woman was dependent upon the condition and the morals of that woman, so that the latter had to be always ready to justify her way of life: "If anyone has treated as a *stria* or a *meretrix* a woman of noble blood, and whom he has not been able to convict of the fact (*si quis mulierem ingenuam striam clamaverit aut meretricem et convincere non poterit*), he shall be condemned to pay 7,500 denarii or 187 sous in gold." It is clear from this article

\*Translator's Note:—Cf. the *Mariage de convenance*.

that whoever had been accused of having injured and outraged a woman in any manner, might defend himself by asserting that this woman, being a sorceress or a prostitute, was unworthy of profiting by the advantages of the law, since it was provided that a woman practicing a dishonorable and criminal trade could not be insulted under any circumstances. It is to be noted that the gravest insults which might be addressed to a free woman were those of *sorceress* and *courtezan*. The enormity of the fine which the responsible party must pay, undoubtedly to the woman who had been insulted, proves that the Franks despised nothing so much as sorceresses and debauched women. As to the manner in which proof was adduced, we can but base our hypotheses upon the judiciary habits of the Frankish race, which admitted of an oath, single combat and witnesses by way of establishing a fact in the presence of a magistrate.

There are a number of versions of the Salic law, drawn up at different periods and among different tribes; in all these versions, the section *De heburgio* (XXXIII), which contains such severe provisions on the subject of the cruelest insult which a woman had to fear, exhibits certain variations in the amount of the fine, which would appear to diminish as less horror came to be attached to the epithet of *sorceress* and *courtezan*. Thus, in the Salic law as modified by Charlemagne, the fine of 7,500 denarii is reduced to 800, and even to 600 in another code of the same law. This was but 45 sous in gold, according to an ancient manuscript, and even only 15 sous in gold according to another; such was the price of the epithet of *courtezan*, addressed to a free born woman by either a woman or a man. But we shall give over any attempt to establish precisely the amount of this fine, on account of the constant fluctuations in monetary values. All that it is possible to do is to determine, by a comparison, that a fine of 7,500 denarii, making 187 sous in gold, was considerable; since a sorceress or *stria*, convicted of having eaten human flesh (*si stria hominem comederit*) had to pay a fine of but 800 denarii or 20 sous in gold. The Salic law recognized in the case of men but two injuries equivalent to *stria* and *meretrix* for the women; but the penalties were not so heavy, undoubtedly for the reason that the offense was less frequent: The one, *chervioburgus* or *strioportius*, signified *valet of a sorceress* and carried with it a fine of 2,500 denarii or 62 1-2 sous; the second, which we only meet with in the Salic law as corrected by Charlemagne, appears to have been analogous to our word *forgeur*,

for *forgeur* implied specifically a perjurer, one who gave a false oath. An article of the Salic law among the Carlovingians puts practically the same price on *forgeur* and *meretrix*, by taxing the former 600 denarii or 15 sous in gold: *Si quis alterum falsatorem et mulier alteram meretricem clamaverit*. As to the *strioportius*, who played a horrible part in the mysteries of magical Prostitution, he was accused not merely of carrying the cauldron at the witches' sabbath and in their infernal kitchen (*illum qui inium dicitur portasse ubi strias cocinant*, according to a text of the Salic law); he also served as a mount to these infamous creatures and transported them through space to their nocturnal assemblages. The sorceress was not always seated upon the shoulders of her complacent valet; she sometimes embraced him and sometimes also she would hang from the tail of his person, which had been changed into that of a dog or a pig. A *cherrioburgus* also had been seen flying like an arrow through the air, bearing two or three striae, who rode him in the form of a broomstick. These various sorts of insults were of so atrocious a nature that they had not been included in the catalog of ordinary crimes (*condicia*), being comprised under the term of *heburgium*, which implied a true poisoning, and which is not sufficiently rendered by the word *calumny*. All the Barbarian legislators were, moreover, absolutely in accord as to the character of the insult which was offered to a free woman by treating her as a courtesan, but all equally recognized the right of the insulter to prove the truth of his allegation. The text of the Salic law is very brief and very obscure on this point; and in order to interpret it by giving it a few necessary expansions, we must seek in the Lombardian laws of Rotharis a chapter which assuredly contains all the legislation of the Franks with regard to the *heburgium*. Rotharis, who published his code in the year 643, had based it upon the barbaric law, notably the Salic law, which he frequently does no more than to clarify and commentate. According to the code of Rotharis, if anyone in a loud voice had called a girl or a woman a *stria* or a prostitute (*fornicariam aut strigam*), he must make honorable amends or prove the truth of what he had said. In the former case, assisted by a dozen witnesses, who brought guaranties of their oaths, he would swear not to have offered this horrible insult (*nefandum crimen*) except in an access of rage and without legal justification; as a consequence, to punish himself for his incontinence of language, he paid a fine of 20 sous in gold and promised not to utter a similar



calumny. But on the contrary, if the author of the outrage persisted in his accusation and insisted that he could prove it, then he was committed to the justice of God, and was forced to combat the champion whom the injured woman opposed to him. If the combat by its outcome proved that the unfortunate one had deserved the name of *stria* or prostitute, it was she who paid the fine of 20 sous in gold. Otherwise, if this woman's champion won the victory, the vanquished, in order to save his life, was compelled to provide a pecuniary compensation that varied according to the birth and condition of the woman who had been wrongly insulted (see the *Recueil des Lois des Barbares*, published by Paul Canciani, Volume I, Page 79); this insult (*meretrix*), addressed to a free woman, was called in the rustic language *extrabo*, which scholiasts have endeavored to translate into Saxon by *entroga*, which has no sense.

The other insults which might be offered a good woman, and which stood in no need of proof, are not specified in the Salic law. The epithet of *screech-owl* or *crow*, which alone is specified, corresponds to *stria*, for the reason that the sorceresses only performed their evil works at night. As to the expression, *stria*, it was applied especially to old women who were suspected of going to the witches' sabbath, where they practiced, it was believed, under the auspices of the powers of evil innumerable debaucheries which we shall see perpetuated in the form of magic rites. But it was not so much verbal as physical insults against which the Salic law was interested in protecting the feminine sex. These insults fell into three principal classes, which might be designated thus: capillary attack, improper liberties, and immodest violence. It is known that the hair, with a woman as with a man of the Frankish race, possessed a sacred and inviolable character. It cost less dearly to kill a pregnant woman with a kick of the foot or a blow of the fist than it did to cut off her hair. In short, if the pregnant woman died as the result of a blow in the belly, the murderer was only fined 22 sous in gold, whereas he had 30 sous to pay for having disarranged the coiffure of a woman and having caused her hair to fall over her shoulders (*si vitta sua solverit aut capilli ad scapula sua tangant*); but one was let off with 15 sous when one had decoiffed the woman merely in a manner to cause her hair to fall to the ground. Liberties of touch were subject to very discouraging fines. A free man who pressed (*instrinxerit*) the hand or the finger of a free woman was fined 600 denarii or 15 sous in gold; if he took

her by the arms (*destrinxerit*), 1200 denarii or 30 sous; if he took her by the arms above the elbow (*strinxerit*), 1400 denarii or 35 sous; if, finally, he touched her breast (*mamillas capulaverit*), 1800 denarii or 45 sous in gold. This last was a fancy which cost twice as dearly as the death of a pregnant woman, and he who did not happen to possess the sum demanded by the law, lost his nose, his ears, or even worse. And yet, there are so many differences in the amount of the fines indicated by the text of the Salic law that it is impossible to reconcile them or to explain them in a satisfactory manner. Thus, in one rendition, which might well be the oldest, the murder of a pregnant woman by a beating (*trabettit*) carried with it a fine of 28,000 denarii, estimated at 700 sous in gold. If the infant alone died in the belly of its mother, the fine was 8,000 denarii or 200 sous.

Rape must have been very rare among the Teutonic peoples, who were not any too subject to transports of the senses. It merely found a place in the barbaric laws as a menacing penalty for libertines who otherwise would have felt no respect for the person of woman. If a fiancée (*druthe* in Saxon) in going to meet her betrothed, met on the road a man who had carnal knowledge of her through violence, the author of this outrage could not settle for it at less than 8,000 denarii or 200 sous. (*Si quis puellam sponasatem vucentum ad maritum et eam in viâ aliquis adsalierit et cum ipsâ violenter moechatus fuerit.*) This settlement was termed in rustic language, *changichaldo*, meaning *market of Prostitution*. If it was established that this fiancée had yielded of her own good will, she lost her quality of *ingenua*, when she happened to be of free condition. The fine was no more when a man, traveling in the company of a free woman, had attempted violence upon her (*adsalierit et vim ille inferre præsumpserit*). Woe to the guilty one if he himself was not free, and if the title of *ingenuus* did not speak in his favor; slave or freed man, he was castrated or put to death. The law of the Ripuarians was still more rigorous than the Salic law against those guilty of deeds of violence to women. The kidnaping of a freed woman by a slave could not be pecuniarily atoned for. A noble ravisher paid 200 sous. A slave who had seduced the servant maid of another and caused her death (the law does not say how) suffered castration or redeemed his person with 6 sous in gold; if the servant maid did not die as a result of the seduction, the slave received 120 blows of the whip or paid 120 denarii to the master of this servant whom he had appropriated. The punishment of castra-

tion, which reappears so often in the codes of the Barbarians, was practiced in two degrees, constituting two sorts of penalties; first, the ablation of the testicles; second, the complete removal of the virile member. It is not to be believed that the patient in either case frequently succumbed to this frightful mutilation, which today would almost always be followed by death. The operators were so clever and the victims so robust that castration entailed no accident, and a cure was not long in being accomplished.

As to adultery, it was punished among the Barbarians with a merciless severity; but we are not to deduce from this severity that the peoples who made use of it had a just idea of the crime from a moral or social point of view. The Barbarian, Visigoth, Burgundian, Ripuarian or Frank saw in adultery only a carnal theft and an attack on the possession of the object legitimately acquired. The theft of 40 denarii, according to the Salic laws, inflicted on a free man either castration or a fine of 6 sous in gold; the theft of a woman from her husband, according to the law of the Ripuarians, called for a settlement of 320 sous in gold. If a woman during the absence of her husband, whom she had supposed to be dead, formed a concubine liaison with another man, and if the first husband suddenly came back, the latter had the right, according to the code of the Visigoths, to dispose as he pleased of his wife and of the successor whom she had given him; he was master of the situation and might either sell them, slay them or give them grace. The law of the Ripuarians, in the section *De forbattudo*, gives us a frightful picture of a vengeance which a husband might take upon his fortunate rival under pretext of a legitimate defense. If he had surprised his wife in a flagrant act of adultery, and if the accomplice to the crime made a show of resistance, the insulted husband had the right to slay this man who had robbed him of his honor; after which, summoning witnesses, he put the corpse on a wattle and dragged it to a square of the city, where he took up his place for forty days with his victim. He would tell to all who asked him under what circumstances he had committed this murder and proclaim the justice of it. At the end of forty days, he would give up the corpse to the family of the dead man and go to swear before the judge that he had killed a man who would have killed him, and who had struck him in place of falling at his feet and demanding grace. The father equally possessed the right to deprive of life the man whom he had surprised in the act of dishonoring his daughter. The Salic law

termed *theoctidia* the act of possessing a free-born girl without the consent of her father and mother; the man who had obtained the girl's consent paid to her parents a fine of 1800 denarii or 45 sous in gold. But the law does not say whether, when the fine had been paid, he thereby had purchased the right to continue his illegitimate relations with the girl, or whether he was forced to marry the latter and to take her with him. The law of the Burgundians appears to account for the silence of the Salic law on this point, by saying that a woman who shall have freely and of her volition entered the dwelling of a man (*ad viri corten*), and who shall have cohabited of her own free will with that man, shall not hold the latter for an adultery (*is qui adulterii dicitui societate permixto*); he shall merely have to pay the parents of the woman the nuptial price (*nuptiale pretium*), and he shall be free to espouse whomsoever shall seem good to him, without having anything to fear.

We do not find in the Salic law any special rule concerning Prostitution properly so-called; but according to the legislation of the Barbarians, it may be affirmed that it was in no wise tolerated in the most remote periods of our history, and that the guilty had to hide or flee as soon as they had been discovered in a camp or in a village of these austere and savage tribes. The ancient law of Schleswig, in which the jurisprudence of the Sicambrian and Salian Franks appears to have been preserved, shows us that incest was not touched by law, when it had been committed with a debauched woman. Only she who was not infamous and who had not sold her body (*quae prius scortum non fecerit, nec infamis fuerit*) was looked upon as belonging to the family and so might preserve intact the bonds of consanguinity; she, on the contrary, who had given herself to all had been placed, by that fact, beyond the law. (See *Histoire du Droit Danois*, by Peter Kofoeancher, 1776, in-4to, Volume II, page 5.) The ancient law of the Goths provides that the woman convicted of the act of Prostitution shall be expelled from the city as unworthy of being a member of the guild, and this shameful expulsion, says the commentator (J. O. Stiernook, in his book, *De Jure Suconum et Gothorum Betusto*, 1672, page 321), was a sufficient penalty to enable a courtesan to wipe out the disgrace attached to her profession and the infamy of her life. The law of the Ripuarians does not provide the banishment of the free woman who has abandoned herself to a number of men; but he who is surprised with her (*si quis cum ingenuâ puellâ moechatus*



*fuerit*) is to pay for the others and is not quit of the enormous fine of fifty sous in gold. This fine was returnable, evidently, to the chief of the tribe, or king. It is our opinion that the jurisprudence of the Barbarians in the matter of Prostitution is to be found formulated in the law of the Visigoths, where a decree of King Reccared, who mounted the throne in 586, forbids Prostitution, in an absolute fashion and under severe penalties. Reccared was a Catholic, and his decrees were undoubtedly submitted to the bishops, who had associated the ecclesiastical power with the temporal, and who held as wards those sovereigns whom they had converted; but we have seen from the Councils that the Catholic Church conformed to Roman legislation on many moral points and, notably, that it shut its eyes to public Prostitution. The laws of the Barbarians, on the contrary, did not display this corrupting tolerance but relentlessly pursued women of an evil life, who were a disgrace to the city where they lived and where they practiced their ignoble trade.

The decree of Reccared is highly developed and very explicit; it may be considered the general code of Prostitution among the Barbarians, among the Franks of Belgium as well as among the Visigoths of Spain. If a woman or girl of free condition, publicly practicing Prostitution in the city, was recognized as a prostitute (*meretrix agnoscatur*) and had frequently been taken in a flagrant act of adultery; if this poor wretch, without any modesty, entered into illicit relations with a number of men, in accordance with the custom of her vile trade, she was to be arrested by order of the council of the city and driven out of the city, in the presence of all the people, after having received publicly 300 blows of the lash. She was forbidden for the future to give herself again to the practice of Prostitution, and the gates of the city were closed to her forever. If she dared to reappear and to begin again her former manner of life, the council of the city was to give her once more 300 blows of the lash and to consign her as a slave to some poor man, who was to keep her under rigid surveillance, and who was to prevent her from walking about the city. If it happened that this immodest creature gave herself to debauchery with a knowledge of her father or her mother, in order that her venal amours might procure for her parents a means of livelihood, this infamous father and mother, who lived by the dishonor of their daughter (*pro hac iniquâ conscientiâ*) were to have 300 blows of the lash.

Every servant maid of dissolute manners received 300 blows of the lash and, after having been shaved, by order of the judge, was given to her master who was forced to remove her from the city and to keep her in a safe place in order to prevent her from ever returning. In case the master did not care to sell this servant maid and permitted her to reenter the city, he himself was condemned to receive publicly 300 lashes, after which his slave became the property of some poor citizen, in the choice of the king, the judge or the count, and the new master of this vagabond woman took care to prevent her from reappearing upon the scene of her former offense. But in case it happened that this servant was prostituting herself for her master's profit (*adquirens per fornicationem pecuniam domino suo*), the master shared the shame and penalty of his slave by receiving 300 lashes of the whip. The same rigor was observed in the treatment of those common women arrested in the villages and boroughs and convicted of debauched habits.

The judge who, out of negligence or corruption, failed to carry out the decree of Reccared, himself incurred a rigorous chastisement and was to be condemned by the council of the city to receive 100 blows of the lash and to pay 30 sous in the form of a fine to his successor.

## CHAPTER XLI

THE Franks, who had been advancing step by step into Gaul since the middle of the fifth century, did not mix at first with the Roman Gauls, whom they subjected to their domination; they preserved their own manners, their religion and their customs, without permitting themselves to be influenced by contact with that brilliant and voluptuous civilization which they encountered in the conquered cities; they disdained everything which did not come to them from their ancestors, and they seemed to be desirous of preserving their savage individuality amid the different races, the different religions and the different political States which had been conglomerated in the territory of Gaul. But at the same time, they did not endeavor to change anything in the way of life or the character of the first possessors of the soil; they did not impose upon the latter any forced limitations; they merely did not chance to undergo the influence of proximity and example. The demarcation between the Romanized Gauls and the Barbarians remained so clear that, in all the country where the Frankish domination had been established, the Salic law had been set up side by side with the Theodosian code, which had been in use among the Gauls as long as it had been in the rest of the Roman Empire. These two systems of legislation, which possessed the force of law, respectively, over the vanquishers and the vanquished, formed a special code of *mundane laws* (*lex mundana*), in which each person found his rights established according to his origin. Later, the code of Theodosius was replaced by that of Alaric II, King of the Visigoths, and later by that of the Emperor Justinian; as to Barbarian jurisprudence, to the Salic laws were merely added the laws of the Germans, the Bavarians and the Ripuarians. This rapprochement between two systems of jurisprudence so diverse and so opposed is clear enough evidence that the Franks by no means endeavored to subject to their own national code those populations with whom they had avoided mingling. We may see, also, from this that they did not accept, on their own account, those laws to which their slaves or serfs were used. It is, then, certain that Prostitution, which enjoyed a legal status in the Gallo-Roman cities, continued to exist under the same conditions after the conquest of the Franks, without succeed-

ing in corrupting the rude and proud austerity of the conquerors.

The principal chiefs of the Frankish tribes had been summoned into Gaul by the Catholic bishops, who preferred preserving their authority under the Barbarians to yielding their episcopal seats to Arianism, protected by the Roman municipalities. These Frankish chiefs merely conformed to a secret treaty contracted between the influential members of the Gallic clergy, in respecting the churches, the monasteries and the Christian religion. With their warlike hordes, they did not sojourn in the interior of the cities which they had taken by force, or which voluntarily had opened their gates; they lodged in the neighborhood of these cities, in the villages, on the farms, in the fortified camps, in the vicinity of their chariots laden down with booty; they were always ready to take the field and begin a war; they lived an isolated life and fled all relations with the indigenous Gauls and the Roman colonists. A fusion of races and of manners had only been determined by the conversion of Clovis and his Sicambrians to Christianity. At that time, the Franks were dreaming of taking up their abode elsewhere; at that time, the division of lands and men to the profit of the chiefs of the Frankish nation was creating a new society, which was not slow in enveloping Gallo-Roman society and in absorbing the latter in its entirety. The Franks, in becoming Christians, became at the same time Gauls and Romans, without ever losing their birthright and without ceasing to be Barbarians. During more than two centuries, there developed slowly, under the auspices of Merovingian institutions, this French society, made up of so many diverse elements and bearing in itself the germs of Christian civilization. From the time of Clovis to that of Charlemagne, the bishops were the true legislators, and the ecclesiastical code dominated the code of Justinian and the Teutonic laws. Prostitution, condemned by the Church, had no regular and legal standing; but the excesses of the incontinent were all the more glaring. There were not, properly speaking, any courtezans or any prostitutes practicing their shameful trade in the cities governed by the bishops, but there was in every fief (*feudum*), in every rural house (*mansio*), a sort of seraglio, a gynaeceum, in which free women or serfs labored at the spindle or with the needle, and where the master had no difficulty in finding his pleasure. This was concubine Prostitution, which replaced every other sort, until marriage was delivered from these parasitic scandals which were a disgrace to it.



The Franks, we have already said, did not know what sensuality was when they descended into Gaul. They only made use of their wives for the purpose of producing children, and this for them was to accomplish the highest duty that they knew, that of giving many warriors to their tribes; for according to the words of the sophist, Livanius, in his discourse to the Emperor Constantine: "They place all their happiness in war, which seems to be their true element; repose to them is insupportable; their neighbors are never able to persuade them or to compel them to live at peace. These Barbarians are occupied day and night in meditating invasions." They had, then, no leisure to think of enervating recreations, they whose manners, according to Eusebius (*Life of Constantine*, Book I, Chapter 25), resembled those of wild beasts. Sidonius Apollinaris depicts them under colors no less terrible: "Their love for war grows with the years. If they are overcome by numbers or by a disadvantage in position, they yield to death and not to fear. They appear to be invincible, even in defeat, and life is extinguished with them before courage." "They possess no natural propensity for the soft distractions of love. They are not concerned with loving or with being loved by their women," says Tacitus, in speaking of the Germans, who were not different from the Franks of the fifth century; they prided themselves solely on being redoubtable and in appearing great, hideous and strange in the eyes of their enemies. That is why they tinted their blond hair red, which, shaved along the neck behind and brought down over the top of the head in front, fell in long tresses or was bound up in a tuft on the top of the head. This abundance of hair was an emblem of their physical strength and a privilege of their race; they call themselves *hairy warriors*,\* and they kept of their beards only the fringed mustaches which sometimes hung down all the way to their breasts. As to their ordinary costume, it was not made for a leisurely and voluptuous life; narrow garments of deerskin or buckskin covered their vigorous members\*\* and lent themselves to all their supple and agile movements; they carried a curved sword called *scramasax*, and a hatchet with two cutting edges hung from their girdles; they never laid aside their arms, even at those nocturnal feasts where the beer filled their cups of black or red earth, each time

\**Translator's Note*:—Meaning of the modern *poilu*.

\*\**Translator's Note*:—Trousers rather than toga.

that they repeated the refrain of one of their warrior songs. They always arrived drunken at the bed of one of their wives or their servants, and they never failed to leave it before it was day, as though it were a shame to see an *ariman* (here *man*, man of war) in the arms of a woman.

The Franks, however, possessed a divinity who presided over marriages or rather over generations; this was Frea, or Frigga, wife of Woden, the Odin of the Scandinavians, the god of war and of carnage.\* She repaired the evils caused by her husband; she gave life after the latter had given death; she dispensed to the brave repose and pleasure (*pacem voluptatemque largiens mortalibus*, says Adam of Bremen, in his *Ecclesiastical History*). Adam of Bremen adds that the worshipers of this Venus of the North represented her under the form of a monstrous phallus (*cejus epiam simulacrum ingenti Priapo*), but he does not adduce any evidence to establish this striking point, and we should be very embarrassed if we were to attempt by means of ancient authorities to justify the presence of the phallus in the religion of the Franks. However this may be, this phallus was not the symbol of libertinism and obscene passions; it represented nothing other than the divine act of generation, and was merely an attribute of creative nature. One might, perhaps, assign to the cult of Frea, rather than to that of Priapus, the majority of phallic traditions which were very widespread in those countries in which the Franks had sojourned, and one must see also the Venus of the North in the idols, in the upraised stones, in the trunks of trees cut in the form of the serpent, and in the attributes of Priapus which villagers respected and worshiped down to the ninth century. There have been discovered, in the ruins of a number of Frankish settlements along the banks of the Rhine, a large number of phalli in bronze and ivory, which must have been commemorative offerings, presented to Frea by the women rather than by the men. It is only in the idolatry of the Phœnicians that we find Venus, or the female nature, symbolized by a phallus. At the end of the fourth century, when the Goddess Frea, honored by the Franks of the Yssel, may have introduced a new sort of Venus into Roman paganism, chapels were dedicated to the two divinities, which were, perhaps, of Frankish origin, and which St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, shows us as concurring in the most

\**Translator's Note*:—Mr. J. U. Nicolson notes that this deity is analogous to the Welch *Gwydion*.

secret act of generation. It was Liber and Libera who occupied the same temple, where the sexual parts of the man were to be seen placed beside those of the woman, in the form of an image of these divinities who were called the *father* and the *mother*. St. Augustine cites a singular passage from Varro on the subject of the attributes of Liber and Libera, whom we do not hesitate to recognize in the Frea of the Franks: *Liberum a Liberamento appellatum volunt, quod mares in coeundo, per ejus beneficium, emissis seminibus, liberentur. Hoc idem in feminis agere Liberam, quam etiam Venerem putant, quod et ipsas perhibeant semina emittere, et ob hoc Libero eandem virilem corporis partem in templo poni; femineam Liberae.*

But Clovis, baptized by St. Remy, cast down the idols which he had worshiped, and the Franks, following his example, had themselves baptized, renouncing the gods of their ancestors. Their Catholicism was for a long time as gross as their idolatry had been; they understood neither the dogma nor the morality of the religion which they had embraced, and which was limited for them to certain practices and certain ceremonies. The bishops always made a successful use of the ecclesiastical authority in mollifying and correcting the manners of these Sicambrians; they were engaged in an incessant struggle with these Barbarians, who knew no other law than their own instincts and their own brutal passions; they did not hesitate to excommunicate them, thereby exposing themselves to insult, to evil treatment, even to death, in the effort to hold the rein on neophytes, who were in the habit of abandoning themselves with a savage fury to all sorts of excesses, and who made sport, above all, of the sacrament of marriage. The kings, like the *leudes* and the *letes*, kept a number of concubines who succeeded one another, and who sometimes enjoyed a simultaneous reign. Now the Church, basing its position upon the unanimous sentiment of the Councils, permitted every layman a single legitimate spouse or a single concubine, according to the custom of the Roman law, which was a survival of polytheism. The clergy themselves enjoyed the same privileges, and nothing was more frequent than to see a married bishop or a priest with his concubine. But the Franks did not content themselves with Catholic tolerance, which permitted each one either a wife or a concubine; they did not hesitate to change wives or concubines as often as the desire seized them to form a new union; and each would keep, in addition to his rightful wife, a number of concubines

who simultaneously shared the master's couch. They had, in the most retired part of the house, a gynaeceum of women or of servant maids (*ancillae*), who gave them children, and who took turns in the master's bed. This was a custom of all the Barbarians, who evidenced their nobility and their riches by the number of their wives, their horses and their dogs. Among the lower-class poor, marriage was monogamous, for the reason that the husband could not afford to possess a number of wives; but the wife or concubine whom he did possess frequently gave place to another, for divorce was not marked by any more formalities than was marriage.

We may understand from this how the Gallic clergy had to combat the disorderly manners of these Barbarians, who grew indignant at every restraint, and who saw an intolerable servitude in every prescription of the law, human or divine. The Franks would not suffer the priests to see, or condemn that which was veiled in the sanctity of the domestic fireside; they contributed willingly to all the expenses of religion; they gave generous alms; they gave still more generously for the construction and embellishment of the churches, for the upkeep of the monasteries, for the shrines, the reliquaries, the tombs of the saints, but they became unruly and rebellious when their private conduct became an object of reprimands and anathemas on the part of the bishops and the clergy. They did not conform, moreover, to the precepts of the Gospel, which looked upon every woman as the equal of the man, regarding the two as one flesh; the woman, according to their idea, was less the companion of man than his slave or his servant, and this servant, this slave, far from being enfranchized by marriage, found in the latter institution merely a heavier yoke and a harder master. Moreover, all the women among the Franks had accepted this condition of servitude and inferiority as an attribute of their sex, and they were not even grateful to their clergy for the protection which the latter endeavored to extend to them; for the excommunication that struck their husbands or their masters involved them in its consequences, and exposed them to reprisals which only too often were bloody ones. A Frank, who had repudiated his wife or driven out his concubine, did not hesitate to slay her rather than to take her again in obedience to the injunctions of his bishop, even when he outwardly yielded to the threats of the Church.

These marriages, these concubine alliances, it is true, were not for the most part consecrated by the religious benediction; they were



consummated in accordance with the Salic law, by means of the sou and the *denarius* or *denier*, which the woman received as a symbol of the nuptial contract; this contract, consented to in the presence of witnesses, was not written and signed except in the unusual case in which the husband, the day after the wedding night, assigned a dowry to his bride, by casting a blade of straw upon her breast and by taking the little finger of her left hand. The morning-present (*morghen gabe*) constituted, almost in itself, the bond of a union which had been begun the night before by the concession of a sou in gold and a denier in silver, which the bridegroom had placed in the hand of his wife. This sou and this denarius appeared to have been the uniform price (*praemium*) which a woman, whatever her rank was, could claim as the price of her virginity.

After having accepted of the man the sou and the denarius, the woman looked upon herself as sold to this man, and she no longer belonged to herself, at least until the chains of this servitude had been broken by divorce or by death. We may judge of the submission of a wife to her husband from the terms which she employed in addressing him: "My lord and my husband," she would say, "I, your humble servant (*Domine et jugalis mei, ego ancilla tua*)."

It is thus, in the *Formulas of Marculphus* (Book II, Chapter 27), the woman speaks to her lord and master. There was but a single case in which a married woman might escape the slavery of her position and relieve herself of her abasement. When a girl born of free parents had cast her lot with that of a serf, and had given herself to the latter, out of love or imprudence, she kept the condition of this spouse, who was unworthy of her, and became a serf like him; but the law of the Ripuarians offered always, for the sake of her family's honor, the means of regaining her liberty; at the request of a parent or a friend, she might have herself cited before the king or the count, who would interrogate her as to her dishonorable marriage; she would avow the fact and cast herself upon the mercy of the king or the count. The latter would then order the serf husband to appear and would confront him with his wife, to whom he must silently offer a distaff and a sword. If the woman chose the distaff, she remained a slave forever and at the mercy of the man, seeing that she had loved the latter enough to sacrifice everything for him. If, on the contrary, she took the sword, she became free again by slaying the man who had made her a slave. She effaced thus the shame of her Prostitution

in the blood of the one who had been guilty of it, possibly through no will of his own. The distaff (*concula*) was the emblem of the servile condition which marriage imposed upon women. After marriage, they appeared no more in public; they did not frequent the company of men; they never went out except veiled and covered with ample garments, in which their feet and their hands remained always concealed; they passed their lives in spinning hemp and wool, in making and dyeing cloth, and in giving birth to and in rearing children. Every time the Merovingian historians introduce us into the apartments of women, even though these women are queens, they picture them to us as occupied in the duties of the household and in needlework, far from curious glances and profane desires.

Concubine alliances, which suited the manners of the Franks, became so numerous that a Frank had to be poor indeed to have but a single wife and two servant maids in his house. The Church winked at these disorders, so long as it might appear to ignore them, and so long as no one appealed to put a stop to it. It carried its condescension with regard to the masters of the country so far as to permit them to have permanent relations with their female servants, provided they dispensed with all matrimonial formalities; but Salvianus, who was a Gaul and who wrote in the middle of the fifth century, informs us that ecclesiastical tolerance on the subject of concubines had been so ill-interpreted that the majority of those who lived in concubinage looked upon themselves as legitimately married and so took no other wives than their servants, with whom they cohabited, fulfilling the duties of a husband (*ad tantam res in prudentiam venit, ut ancillas suas multi uxores putent, atque utinam sicut putantur esse quai conjuges, ita solae haberentur uxores*). The man who was content with his concubines was imposing a sort of restraint upon his desires by keeping those desires within the more or less restricted circle of his domestic amours. And so, these amours, however illicit, found grace before the canonical tribunal, for the reason that they were looked upon as forestalling greater excesses and as assuring the peace of Christian society. The Pope, St. Leo, towards the end of the fifth century, extends his pontifical mantle over the abuse of concubinage, when he said, in a letter to the Bishop of Narbonne; "Daughters who are married with the authority of their parents have nothing with which to reproach themselves, if the women who possessed their husbands before them were not truly married, for the reason that

a married woman is one thing, a concubine is another." It is our opinion that the word *concubine*, at those periods in which it was so frequently employed and almost always in a complimentary sense, was applied to various degrees of conjugal association; but if this word in the singular possessed ordinarily only a respectable signification, the same word in the plural took on an injurious and indecent sense.

Down to the reign of Charlemagne, according to the Abbot of Cordenoy, in his *History of France*: "The quality of *concubine*, expressed in decent language, designates a woman married with honor, and whose marriage, even though consummated with less formality than those which are called *solemn*, is none the less valid. The best informed of our juriconsults (Cujas) says that concubinage is a bond so legitimate that a concubine may be accused of adultery as well as a wife; that the law permits one to marry, under the title of concubines, certain persons whom one considers not one's equal through lack of some of the qualities necessary to maintain the full honor of marriage. And that, even when the marriage is something more than concubinage in its dignity and in its civil effects, the name of *concubine* is still an honorable one, quite different from that of *mistress*; but that, finally, the vulgar in France have confounded these two words, from a failure to understand the nature of concubinage, although the institution is in use in many places, where it is called *half-marriage*, and in other terms, *marriage of the left hand*."\* The Abbot of Cordenoy in relying on the authority of Cujas, has failed to remember that that learned juriconsult had studied Roman rather than Barbarian law. Concubinage, among the Franks and the Roman Gauls, who were not slow in imitating their masters did not always possess this character of a half-marriage, assigned it by Roman jurisprudence. It was sufficiently different from a half-marriage, in that it was subject to incessant renewals, and in that it included sometimes, a certain number of women under the same régime. Under certain circumstances, it is true, a king, a magnate, a noble who espoused a woman of inferior condition did not accord to her the title of wife but that of concubine, which did not carry with it the implication that a Christian marriage had been celebrated. Ordinarily, the concubine was a servant or a slave who had entered the bed of her lord and master.

\**Translator's Note*.—Mr. J. U. Nicolson notes the modern royal morganatic marriage.

This concubine might claim a sort of nuptial legitimacy, in so far as she did not share these most delicate duties with another woman. The Franks, especially the Frankish chiefs, took concubines whom they espoused in the Frankish manner, by means of the sou and the denarius, in order, in case of divorce or repudiation, not to be restrained by the bonds of religious marriage.

The Church had nothing to do with these unions which she had not sanctioned, and if she sometimes meddled with them against her will, when a startling scandal prevented her from preserving neutrality, she did not go into the terrible questions of sacrilege and Christian bigamy, but contented herself with pronouncing judgment on the parties merely on the question of incontinence and fornication. We shall persist in believing that, under the first and second race of kings, the woman married according to the rites of the Church was called *wife*, while the woman who was only married according to the Salic law was known as *concubine*: *Secundum legem salicam et antiquam consuetudinem*, says the *Formulas of Marculphus*, on the subject of the sou and the denarius, which constituted civil marriage among the Franks.

Concubine alliances were, by their nature, bereft of ecclesiastical sanction, being dependent merely upon the whim of the persons who contracted them according to their fancy, and who broke them without scruple. Such was, for more than three centuries, the state of the family in France: by the side of the legitimate wife, who alone was recognized by the Church, there were one or more concubines, to whom the master of the house showed more or less respect by reason of their birth, their conduct or the affection which he had for them. Sometimes, these concubines were so numerous under the same roof that the man who kept them and who supported them at his own expense was forced to dismiss some of them in order that they might not all die of hunger. The Salic marriage was only in use for girls of Frankish origin, who married in concubine fashion the men of their own race. These concubines in general were conscious of their inferior position as compared to the woman legitimately married by Catholic rite, while the latter, satisfied with her own rank and her place in her husband's affection, left the others free to play their concubine rôles. The children who were the result of these concubine alliances did not possess the same rights as children born of the legitimate wife; but they did possess a semi-legitimacy, and their bastardy



carried with it no touch of shame, since they were proud of it, being called the bastards of the house; they remained always in a state of inferiority and respectful submission to their brothers, born of the true wife, who alone represented the hereditary branch, and who alone shared among them the goods of their father. The concubines appeared to possess no other destiny than that of supplementing the insufficiencies of the wife, when the latter was forced to be absent from the conjugal couch through menstrual indisposition, through illness, or by reason of having to nourish a newborn child. There were also many ranks among the concubines: some of them, of free condition and Frankish race, were looked upon as being as decently married as though the Church had sanctioned the contract of the sou and the denarius; others, of servile condition and foreign race, might never assume the airs of a legitimate wife. A servant girl, who had never done anything but enter the bed of her master, preserved merely a sort of authority over her companions, who showed her some deference; this authority increased with time, as the master (*dominus*) confirmed it by the good will shown to an aged mistress.

All the women attached to a house, in the quality of wives, concubines and servants, lived together on the inside of the dwelling, where no man might enter without the permission of the master. The place reserved for the women was called *gynaeceum* among the Franks, as among the Romanic Gauls (in Greek, *gynaikeon*). The word *gynaeceum* had been corrupted in various ways according to the barbaric dialects which had adopted it, and we see it written *genecium*, *genicium*, *genecaeum*, and *genizeum*, in the low-Latin authors. This place was more or less spacious, according to the importance of the house. It was composed of a number of chambers and included often various work-rooms and a great dormitory, which brought together those of all conditions and all ages. The mistress of the house, whether the wife or the principal concubine, was charged with directing the labors of the gynaeceum. These labors included more especially those which had to do with the making of cloth and the manufacturing of garments. In those times, as throughout antiquity, men would have blushed to turn their hands to the work of women (*muliebri opus*), and in the domestic arts, they labored with the hatchet and the hammer. The ancient glossaries are in agreement on this point, that the preparation of woolens belonged especially to the gynaeceums of the North; while the spinning of silk was character-

istic of those of the midland countries. Papias says that the gynaeceum is called *textrinum* (workroom), "because the women who gather there work in wool" (*quod ibi conventus feminarum ad opus lanificii exercendum condeniat*). Pollux says that the gynaeceum may be called *sayrie*, for the reason that there the women work in silk. These institutions, with an analogous purpose, existed among the Romans of the Eastern Empire; they were even established on a vast scale in Constantinople, and there is no room for doubt that they gave birth to the seraglios of the Mohammedans, which were not so laborious, being devoted exclusively to the functions of marriage. Among the Romans of the East, there were gynaeceums for the two sexes, who worked separately or together, according to the master's pleasure; but in these gynaeceums there were also slaves, who endured the most rigorous constraint, and were subject to the lash and the rod. The gynaeceums of the emperors, the magistrates and the imperial officers were also penitentiary workshops, to which were sent, for a fixed time according to their sentences, poor folk and vagabonds who had committed a crime and who were unable to pay the fine. It is stated in the *Passion* of St. Romain that the Saint was clad in a woolen chemise and locked up in a gynaeceum as a sign of contempt (*ad injuriam*). Lactantius, in his book, *On the Death of the Persecutors*, states that the mothers of families and the patrician ladies who were suspected of being converted to the faith of the Christians were cast in disgrace into a gynaeceum (*in gynaeceum repiebantur*).

In the manner of the emperors of Byzantium, the Merovingian and Carlovingian kings had gynaeceums in their country houses, and these gynaeceums embraced the whole population of women, among whom these sovereigns did not disdain to choose those best suited to the capricious pleasures of the royal couch. De Villis enumerates the different work which was done in these vast ateliers, where slaves and eunuchs also labored. "In our gynaeceums," says Charlemagne, "is to be found everything that is necessary for labor, that is to say, linen, wool, cochineal, madder, combs, flattening-mills, cards, soap, oil, vases, and all the things that are necessary in that place." Another capitulary of the year 813, adds: "Our women, who are employed in our service (*feminae nostrae quae ad opus nostrum servientes sunt*), draw from our storerooms the wool and hemp from which they manufacture capes and chemises." We see, in the book of the *Miracles of St. Bertin* (*Acts. S. Bened.*, Volume I, page

131), that young children were apprenticed to the great gynaeceums, where they learned to spin, to weave, and to sew and to do all sorts of woman's work (*in genecio ipius nendi, cusandi, texendi, omnique artificio muliebris operis edoctus*). A master, however this may be, was very jealous of the inmates of his gynaeceum, and he permitted no one to enter the place, which was protected as a sanctuary in the legislation of the Barbarians. "If anyone," says the law of the Germans, "has slept with the girl of a gynaeceum which does not belong to him, and that against the will of this girl, he shall be fined 6 sous in gold (*si cum puellâ de genecio priore concubuerit aliquis contra voluntatum ejus*)." The text of the law differs in the manuscript, but the sense does not vary greatly. Charlemagne, in a new rendition of this law, merely adds to these capitularies a provision that only an established rape is to be punished and not a mere attempt at seduction (*si quis alterius puellam de genicio violaverit*) and so does away with the uncertainty attaching to that sort of violence which the inmate of the gynaeceum might assert had been exerted *against her will*.

It is certain that the gynaeceums were not all of the same order, or at least that there were different classes of them, the labor in some being less heavy and less disagreeable than in others. Thus, the rudest tasks might be assigned to subordinate slaves, or to the disciplinary workshops. This is not to say, on the other hand, as Ducange endeavors to prove in his *Glossary* (on the word *Gynaeceum*), that the majority of the gynaeceums were merely supplements to the lupanars and were no more than the breeding-places of Prostitution. The text which Ducange borrows from the law of the Lombards is not conducive to the deduction which he endeavors to draw from it: "We have decreed that if a woman, under any disguise whatsoever, is taken in a flagrant act of debauchery (*si femina, quae vestem habet mutatam, maecha deprehensa fuerit*), she shall not be placed in a gynaeceum as has been the custom heretofore, since having prostituted herself to one man, she is not likely to lose the opportunity of prostituting herself to many." This text would seem to prove, on the contrary, that the law looked after the purity of manners in the gynaeceums. And yet, the gynaeceums, those of the kings in particular, frequently deserved their evil reputation, and in the tenth century, their names even became synonymous with that of a place of debauchery. The master of a house had but to enter into a con-

cubine contract with his servant maids and work-women, who disputed the honor of sharing his couch. "If anyone," says Reginon (*De Eccles. discip.*, I, II, Chapter 5), "consents to commit an adultery in his own house with his servant maids or the inmates of his gynaeceum. . . ." This passage would tend to indicate that the gynaeceums, in addition to servants, admitted women boarders, who hired themselves out under certain conditions. The upkeep of a gynaeceum must have cost very dearly; the 75th chapter of the synod of Meaux, cited by Ducange, speaks of laymen who had chapels in their houses, and who felt authorized on that account to levy tithes which enabled them to support their dogs and the women of their gynaeceums (*inde canes et gyneciarias suas pascant*). The gynaeceums came to restrict their ambitious proportions as manufactories were established and commerce, by distributing its products everywhere, rendered futile the making of a hoard of woven goods and other objects in individual dwellings. But the life of women did not cease to be of a communal nature, and despite the emancipation which Knighthood brought them, under certain solemn circumstances, their private lives remained walled in; the only difference was that there were no longer any concubines in these family sanctuaries, where the legitimate wife, surrounded by her servant maids and her children, now set an example of industry, of decency and of virtue.



## CHAPTER XLII

THE kings of the first race were engaged in an incessant struggle with the Church, on account of their concubines, whom they took and repudiated in turn, without consulting the bishops; while the latter, despite their threats and their anathemas, could not succeed in bringing the Franks to respect the religious institution of marriage; for the new converts remained pagans in their manners, and bore with reluctance the Evangelic yoke. The history of these kings is full of their wars, of their crimes and excesses; but it was especially in their amours that they had cause to complain of the importunate policing of the ecclesiastical powers, which granted them neither peace nor truce, and which refused to tolerate their setting an example of Prostitution. However, the scandal remained ordinarily hidden in the bosom of the gynaeceum, and public rumor barely revealed what took place inside. When an echo of these carryings-on had come to the ears of the confessor, the latter would arm himself with his excommunicatory thunders, and would forbid the sinner to approach the Holy Table until he had purified his couch and broken with the feminine devil. We cannot understand the excesses of the Frankish kings with their concubines until we come to read, in Gregory of Tours, the naïve account of the marriages of King Clotaire, son of Clovis, who had seven wives or admitted concubines. "He had for wife Ingonde, and he loved her singly, until she made this request of him: 'My lord has done with me what he would; he has received me into his bed; now, as the climax to his favors, I would that my lord the King should listen to what his servant demands of him. I beg you to seek for my sister, your slave, a man capable and rich who will elevate her in place of debasing her, and who will give me the means of serving you with still greater fidelity.' At these words, Clotaire, already all too inclined to pleasure, became inflamed with love for Aregonde, betook himself to the country where she resided, and attached her to him by marriage. Then he returned to Ingonde and said to her: 'I have labored to procure for you this supreme favor which you have demanded of me, and in seeking a man rich and wise who deserves to be united to your sister, I have found none better than myself. Know then, that I have taken her for a wife; I hope

this does not displease you?'—'What appears good to the eyes of my master,' replied Ingonde, 'let him do; only may his servant always live in the grace of her King!' " This curious picture of manners shows us how things went in the royal gynaeceums.

The sons of Clotaire I were polygamous like their father and even more given to incontinence and adultery. The elder, Caribert, King of Paris, was married to Ingoberge, who was elevated by her illustrious birth above her rivals: "She had in her service two young girls, daughters of a poor artisan; one, named Marcioviève, wore a religious habit; while the other was called Meroflede, and the King was hopelessly in love with her. Ingoberge, jealous of the interest which these others inspired in the King, conceived the idea of depreciating the two sisters by calling to Caribert's attention the servile condition of their father, who was engaged in carding wool in the paddock of the palace; but Caribert, irritated against his wife, who had thought to make him blush, proceeded to repudiate her, and took successively, Meroflede and Marcioviève; but he was not content with this; he soon came to prefer another servant, named Theudechilde, whose father was a shepherd. This latter, although a concubine of the lowest order, came into the possession of the treasure of Caribert when this Prince died, without leaving an heir, in the arms of Theudechilde, Marcioviève and Meroflede, who shared his last caresses between them. The brothers of Caribert possessed also, in the same degree, the vice of incontinence. Gontran, King of Orleans and of Burgundy, devout man as he was, changed wives as often as Caribert, and kept concubines of low extraction without being troubled by the bishops, who called him the *good* Gontran (*bonus*), in his amours. Chilperic, King of Soissons, is the one to whom contemporary chroniclers attribute the largest number of wives, married in accordance with the law of the Franks, by means of the ring, the sou and the denarius. One of these wives, named Audowere, had in her service Fredegonde, a young girl of Frankish origin, as remarkable for her beauty as she was for her astuteness. Chilperic had no sooner seen her than he was greatly taken with her; but Fredegonde was possessed of too much ambition to be satisfied with the rôle of a subordinate concubine. Audowere, being brought to bed of child in the absence of the King her husband, Fredegonde, acting in concert with a bishop whom she had won over to her side, abused the simplicity of the Queen by persuading her to hold her own infant over the baptismal font. Now the

character of godmother was incompatible with that of wife, according to the doctrine of the Church. When Chilperic came back from war, all the women of the royal house went forth to meet him, bearing flowers and singing his praises. Fredegonde was the first to present herself. "With whom will my lord sleep this night?" she asked him boldly (*Cum qua dominus meus rex dormiet hac nocte?*); "for the Queen, my mistress, is now your majesty's godmother, being the godmother of her own daughter."—"Ah, well!" responded Chilperic jovially, "If I cannot sleep with her, I shall sleep with you." Audowere came to him with her child in her arms. "Woman," the King said to her, "you have committed a crime in the simplicity of your mind; you are my godmother, and can no longer be my wife." He repudiated her upon the spot, and she at once went to take the veil in a convent. Fredegonde did not occupy the place of Audowere more than a few months. Chilperic demanded in marriage Galeswinde, daughter of the King of the Goths, and in order to obtain the hand of this Princess, he repudiated his wives and dismissed his mistresses, even Fredegonde, whom he had not ceased to love. But he was not slow in coming back to this beautiful concubine and in sacrificing the Queen to her, causing the Queen to be strangled as she slept. Fredegonde, whom he afterwards married, involved him in a net of pleasures, which put him at the mercy of his criminal companions.

Such is the history of nearly all the Merovingian kings, who did not recoil from murders or bloody slaughterings to serve their loves and to obtain or to keep a concubine. They lived in their royal domains, far from the eyes of their subjects, who barely caught an echo of the orgies of these slothful kings, given over to debauchery and constantly falling into drunkenness and lust. The interior life of the palace was but a mire of Prostitution, into which Frankish royalty sank deeper and deeper. Dagobert I, who possessed a number of kingly qualities, was not more continent than his predecessors, and his minister, St. Eloy, did not appear to concern himself with the private manners of this Prince, who built churches, founded monasteries and covered with gold the relics and the tombs of the saints, but who, at the same time, had a throng of concubines, in the manner of King Solomon (*luxuriæ supramodum deditus, tres habebat instar Salomonis reginas maxime et plurimas concubinas*, says Fredegaire, in his *Chronicle*). The bishops were tireless in anathematizing the kings and princes for their disorderly conduct; they exposed them-

selves courageously to the wrath of these too often incorrigible libertines. They did not fear either death or martyrdom, when it was a question of defending the sanctity of Catholic marriage against the audacities of pagan concubinage. Praetextat, Bishop of Rouen, was thus murdered by an emissary of Fredegonde; Didier, Bishop of Vienne, was stoned by order of Brunehault; St. Lambert was assassinated by one Dodon for having endeavored to separate the Prince Pepin from his concubine Alpais. "St. Lambert," says the *Chronicles of St. Denis* (in 708), "reproved the Prince Pepin for keeping Alpais, a lady who was not his wife, in addition to Plectude, his proper wife. The brother of this Alpais, named Dodon, killed St. Lambert merely because the Saint had reproved Pepin for his sin." The bishops and the priests, whom Prostitution always had to count upon as implacable adversaries, were not always free of blame in the reproaches which they addressed to their neighbors, and which sometimes fell back upon their own heads. Gregory of Tours pictures for us, under the most odious colors (Books VIII and IX), Bertchram, Bishop of Bordeaux, who corrupted servant maids, married women, and who even dishonored the royal couch. At the moment St. Colomban, Abbot of Luxeuil, was hastening to the court of Theodoric II, King of Burgundy, to make the latter blush for his adulteries, and to invite him to expel his concubines, Pope Gregory I was writing to Queen Brunehault, enjoining her to punish the immodest and perverse priest (*sacerdotes impudici ac nequiter conversantes*). It was Brunehault who had perverted her young grandson, Theodoric II, by surrounding him with concubines and by setting him an example of the most infamous debauchery. The two queens, Brunehault and Fredegonde, rivaled one another in their vices and their crimes, till they reached the age when the fires of concupiscence were extinguished; they appeared to be endeavoring to see who could acquire the more lovers, who could be the more ardent in her debaucheries, and who would be the last to leave the amorous lists. It was Brunehault who died the first, at the tail of a runaway horse, borne across the fields and hacked to pieces after having been promenaded nude upon a camel's back for three days, a butt for the soldiers of Clotaire II, Fredegonde's son.

We shall not follow all the kings of the first and second race down the long and monotonous list of their adulteries and misdeeds; but to show how the custom of keeping concubines had relaxed the conjugal bond, we shall recall the fact that Charlemagne, that wise and



glorious monarch, who was the support and honor of the Church, had four legitimate wives and five or six concubines, without counting a multitude of transient mistresses. His concubines, with all of whom Eginhard does not make us acquainted, were not, like his wives, of noble and royal origin; Eginhard merely names Maltegarde, Geruinde, Regina, and Adallinde, who gave him many children whom he caused to be reared under his own eyes. "His daughters were very beautiful," says Eginhard, "and tenderly beloved of their father. It is therefore a matter of astonishment that he never cared to marry one of them, either to one of his own people, or to strangers. Up to the time of his death, he kept them all by his side in the palace, saying he could not do without their society. Thus, while he was happy in other respects, he incurred in connection with his daughters, the malignity of fortune. But he dissimulated his chagrin, as though there had never been any suspicion against them, and as though rumor had not busied itself with their conduct." This singular passage, in which the historian is evidently embarrassed, is undoubtedly insufficient to prove that Charlemagne had incestuous relations with his own daughters; but it gives room for interpretations the least favorable to the morality of this great Emperor. Tradition would have it that one of the daughters of Charles, named Imma, had married Eginhard, who would not have failed to boast of it if he had been the son-in-law of so redoubtable a master. It is in the capitulary of the Abbot of Lorsch, written in the twelfth century, that this legend is related as an authentic fact. Eginhard loved Imma, who had been affianced to the King of the Greeks; Imma loved him also with a passion which only increased with time. One evening, he went to knock gently at the door of Imma's chamber; she opened and received him, and they forgot the hour in a long interview; she abandoned herself to her lover's kisses (*statim versa vice solus cum solâ secretis usus colloquiis, et datis amplexibus cupito satisfacit amanti*). Day comes, and Eginhard tears himself from his mistress' arms, and is about to depart, when he perceives that all the exits are blocked: it has snowed during the night and the footprint of a man on the snow would be an accusing proof of his nocturnal sojourn in Imma's apartment. The young girl, rendered audacious by love, thinks of an expedient; she offers to bear Eginhard on her shoulders to the place in the palace where he lodged. She promised to return to her chamber by the same route, stepping in her own footprints. Charlemagne, who had not

slept that night, had risen before dawn and was looking out into the courtyard of the palace. Suddenly, he sees his daughter advancing trembling under the weight of a burden which she deposits with relief, hastily returning to her apartment. This burden was Eginhard, but the snow preserved no other footprints than those of Imma. Charlemagne, a prey at once to astonishment and grief, kept silent as to what he had seen. Imma refused to wed the King of the Greeks, and Eginhard requested of the Emperor that he be sent on a distant mission as a recompense for his former services. Charlemagne could contain himself no longer, but had Eginhard brought before the tribunal of counts and barons; he had resolved, however, to pardon him. "I shall not inflict on my servant," he said, "a penalty which would augment rather than palliate my daughter's dishonor. I judge it more worthy of us, and more convenient to the glory of the Empire to pardon them in favor of their youth, and unite them in legitimate marriage, covering thus with a veil of decency the shame of their misdeed." Eginhard is brought in; he comes forward, trembling under the Emperor's gaze. "It is time to recognize your past services," Charlemagne says to him, "and to recompense your devotion to my person, by the most magnificent gift possible. I therefore accord you my daughter, your porter (*vestram scilicet portatricem*) who, girding her robe about her loins, has been so pleased to serve you as a mount (*quae quandoque alte succinta vestrae subvectioni satis se morigeram exhibuit*)."

This charming legend, based upon a tradition almost contemporary with the event, appears to us to possess a certain relation to that capitulary in which Charlemagne, in banishing from his dominions women of an evil life, inflicts upon the imprudent or debauched person who shall give asylum to one of these, the shame of bearing her on his back to the market-place where she was to be fustigated. The narrative contained in the cartulary of Lorsch permits us to suppose that Charlemagne was alluding to the penalty incurred by a man for opening his house to a prostitute, when he ordered Eginhard, to marry his *porter*. The adventure of Imma and Eginhard, according to tradition, took place in the palace at Aix-la-Chapelle, and it was, precisely, in this residence, in the year 800, that the cartulary was decreed which assigned to the accomplices of Prostitution a chastisement in which is to be found a reminiscence of Imma bearing Eginhard. Might we not suppose that Charlemagne had framed his capit-

lary after having been the witness of the bizarre spectacle on that snowy morning when he had seen a young man carried by a young woman? Perhaps he did not recognize the actors in this amorous episode; perhaps he was at a loss to explain at first the designs of the two mysterious persons who made their way so slowly across the snow. The conjecture is permissible in view of an historic comparison, suggested to us by the capitulary addressed to those officers charged with guarding the palace, a capitulary in which we also find the origin of the functions of the provost of the *hôtel du roi* and those of the office of *master of the revels*.\* Charlemagne ordered each officer of the palace (*ministerialis palatinus*) to make a close census to see if any unknown man or any dissolute woman (*meretricem*) might be hidden among the inmates of the house. In case any woman or man of this sort was discovered, he or she was to be prevented from fleeing, and the suspected person was to be kept under guard until the Emperor had been advised. As to the one in whose company such a man or such a woman had been found, if he was unwilling to make honorable amends, he was to be expelled from the imperial palace. This capitulary, in which there is question of an unknown man and a prostitute lodged unlawfully in the royal palace, might have been provoked by a special circumstance coinciding well enough with the story of Imma and Eginhard.

The rest of the capitulary is of a more general character, although it also relates to this minute search to determine the character of persons inhabiting the royal domain of the city of Aix-la-Chapelle. Radbert, collector of the royal revenues (*actor*), is enjoined to make a minute search in the houses of the Emperor's serfs, at Aix as well as on the farms which were dependencies of the royal residence. Pierre and Gunzo are charged with making a similar visit to the *escraignes* (*scruas*) and the cabins of the serfs; Ernaldus shall visit also the shops of the merchants, Christians or Jews, choosing a time when the proprietor shall not be present. It is certain that this minute search in the palace of Aix and its dependencies resulted in the discovery of one or more suspected individuals. As a result, Charlemagne forbids all those who hold a post in the palace to receive or hide any man who shall have committed a theft, a homicide, an adultery, or any other crime, or who shall have come there to commit such a crime. Whoever dares to infringe the Emperor's

\*Translator's Note:—The *roides ribauds*.

order, if he be a free man, must bear the malefactor upon his back to the market-place, where the guilty one shall be placed in the pillory. But in case a serf shall have disobeyed the imperial order, this serf shall bear the malefactor to the pillory, and from there he shall be led to the market-place to be fustigated as he has merited. "Similarly, in what concerns debauchees and prostitutes (*de gadalibus et meretricibus*)," adds the capitulary, "we desire that they shall be borne by those who have given them shelter to the market-place, where they shall be fustigated. If the guilty party refuses to bear the woman of evil life who has been found in his house, we order that he be beaten with rods along with her, and on the spot." This capitulary, which regulates the interior policing of the palace, indicates the repugnance which Charlemagne felt for women of depraved manners, since he restrains them, not merely from his own residence and domains, but even from the roof of the humblest serf and the domiciles of Jews, here designated as the agents of Prostitution. Charlemagne, as we have already said, did not always preserve an exemplary reserve on his own account, and he had great sensual needs to gratify. It is generally known that this Emperor, whom the romances and the *chansons de geste* picture to us as a giant, *à la barbe grifaigne*,\* was more than a head taller than his knights, being not less than seven feet in height; his strength was excessive; and we may judge, from the *pied de roi*, what was the length of his foot, which established a measure that the metric system only recently displaced; but it is impossible for us, with respect to this measure (*pedale, mensura pedis*), to enter upon a delicate controversy respecting the true origin of the royal foot. We shall limit ourselves to remarking that, in the Middle Ages, comparative proportions were established between various portions of the body; and the foot, from the highest antiquity, bore witness to the virility of a man, while with the woman, it had a signification still more indiscreet; it is in this sense that Horace speaks of a vile feminine foot in his first satire: *Depygis, nasuta, brevi latere ac pede longo est*. A very original legend, gathered by Petrarch, at Aix-la-Chapelle, where everything is replete with memories of the great Emperor, informs us that this monarch, who was

\*Translator's Note:—*Grifaigne* is equivalent to *menacante* (threatening). J. U. N. adds: "Gothic *grîf* or Latin *gryphus* originally meant hooked or clawed. There is possibly a connection here; reference being to a beard pointed to resemble a claw or hook."



later canonized, had his temptations like St. Anthony, and that he fell more than once into sin through the evil works of the Devil. Charles, falling hopelessly in love with a certain woman, whom Petrarch does not otherwise designate, suddenly forgot with her the interests of his people and the glory of his reign. He had no other thought than to live for his mistress. She died suddenly. He yielded then to a despair which nothing could calm, and remained night and day beside the mortal remains, which he could not bear to commit to the earth. He did not cease to embrace the cadaver, which was already the prey of corruption. The Archbishop of Cologne, a venerable prelate, to whom the Emperor accorded ordinarily a blind confidence, was unable to console him or to get him away from his dead love; so he began to pray, and God revealed to him the nature of the obstinate love which Charles had for this woman. There had been put into the mouth of this woman a constellated stone, chased in a ring, and this talisman invincibly bound the Emperor to the body, dead or living, which possessed the ring. Barely was the talisman out of the corpse's mouth when Charlemagne felt his love vanish, and inquired why they had left this mass of corruption under his eyes. But suddenly, Charles was taken with a tenderness—quite different it is true—for the prelate who bore the talisman. He was unable to leave the latter, and would not permit the prelate to budge from his side. The Archbishop, in order to free himself of this servitude, hurled the talisman into the neighboring lake of Aix-la-Chapelle. The ring, at the bottom of the lake, lost nothing of its power, and continued to inspire in Charlemagne the same passion, which merely changed its object. Charles was then in love with the lake, and would not leave it; he fixed his residence there and established there the seat of his Empire, ordering in his will that his sepulchre should be placed where, from the depths of his tomb, he could hear the lake murmuring amorously to the echoes of his immortal name.

Charlemagne was on too good terms with the Church to have anything to fear from its admonitions; he avoided, moreover, with much prudence, all occasion of scandal, and everything which had to do with his concubines and mistresses remained concealed in the recesses of the royal gynaeceum. He refused to tolerate in his subjects that relaxation of manners which the episcopal authorities denounced to him. It was to fortify the authority of the Church that he drew up, in 805, a capitulary which forbade persons of either sex, under pain

of sacrilege, to commit adulteries, fornications, sodomies, incests, or other sins against marriage. The Emperor explained his prohibitions by observing that those countries whose populations were given to illicit pleasures, to adulteries, to the turpitudes of Sodom and to commerce with Prostitutes were neither constant in the faith nor courageous in war (*multae regiones, quae jam dicta inlicita et adulteria vel sodomicam luxuriam vel commixtionem meretricum sectatae*). As a result, whoever was convicted of these excesses, lost his rank and his rights, by going to prison to await the day of public penitence. We are surprised at not finding in the capitularies of Charlemagne, any precautionary or rigorous punitive measure against *lenocinium*, which was called *lenonia*, and which had survived the persecution of the Theodosian and Justinian Codes. There is, however, a capitulary of uncertain date, which seems to concern the *lenonia*, although this shameful trade had not been clearly called to the attention of the magistrates. In this capitulary (Baluze., Volume I, page 545), in which the priests, the deacons and the other clerics are forbidden to receive any foreign women (*extraneam*) in their domicile, in which the monks and the clerics are forbidden to enter the hostelrys to eat and drink there, we remark the following article: *Ut mangones et cociones et nudi homines qui cum ferro vadunt non sinantur vagari et deceptiones hominibus agere*. We are none too sure as to what manner of *naked* man these could be who bore a sword, and we are not averse to believing that there has been an alteration in the text; the word *nudi*, which has no sense might be replaced by *nundi*, which we with some doubt would translate as *foreign*. This article would thus mean: "Jockeys, courtiers and foreign merchants, who bear arms, shall no longer be permitted to go here and there, making dupes." It would be easy to demonstrate, in the course of a philological dissertation, that the low-Latin employed the word *mangones* in the sense of *jockeys*, *knaves*, and *procurers*, rather than in the sense of *lackeys* and *thieves*; *mango* had succeeded *leno*. As to *cociones*, which must be translated literally by *coyons*, they were couriers of the vilest species. A writer of the tenth century (*Nic. Specialis, De reb. sicul.*), cited by Ducange, says that thieves were not designated by the generic term, *mangones*, until about this period. Ducange says that the *cociones* are synonymous with jockeys, hucksters and second-hand-dealers who went about the fairs, and who only busied themselves with shameful commerce.

The lenons certainly existed, even though they were hidden under other names; it might be proved, for example, that throughout the Middle Ages the jockeys or horse dealers did not limit themselves to buying and selling horses, mules and asses; they trafficked still more lucratively in Prostitution. But it is a fact remarkable enough that the expressions, *lenocinium* and *lenonia*, *leno* and *lenarius*, *lena*, and *lenaria*, are very rarely employed by the Catholic writers of Merovingian and Carlovingian France. In the absence of the word, we do not believe that we are, therefore, to deduce the absence of the fact. Thus, in applying historical criticism to a legend of the seventh century, we come upon a lenon, numbered among the saints, under the name of Lenogesilus. It appears to us incontestable that this word was formed from *leno* and from *Gesilus*, which would have been the name of the person, whereas *leno* was but descriptive of his quality. This Lenogesilus, who lived in the time of Clotaire II (619), attracted (*traduxit*) into his cell a virgin named Agneflede and caused her to take the veil; they dwelt together and fought valiantly in the ways of the Lord (*strenue Domino militant*). The Devil was jealous of the happiness of these two sheep, and he breathed in the ear of the King that a certain Lenogesilus, having seduced a virgin by magic, was living with her in impiety and debauchery (*modo legitima conjugia violantes inter se invicem nefandis studiis commiscuntur*). Clotaire summoned the two supposed accomplices, but was wholly edified by a miracle which manifested the innocence of Lenogesilus. This holy man, in arriving at the palace of the King, who was absent, complained of cold; he sent for fire to those who tended the bake-ovens; but Agneflede had nothing in which to carry this fire. "Take your mantle!" he said to her, smiling on the bakers. Agneflede held up the hem of her robe and received the burning coals without the robe being burned or even singed. Those who had been witnesses of the miracle reported it to the King, who loaded Lenogesilus and Agneflede with presents and sent them both back to their cell. It is thus that the lenon Gesilus becomes St. Lenogesilus in the legend preserved by the Bollandists; as for his companion, Agneflede, she did not have, like him, the honor of being canonized.

The successors of Charlemagne probably drew up a number of capitularies against Prostitution which we no longer possess; for J. Dutillet, who had at his disposition the *Trésor des Chartes*, and who has edited his *Receuil des Rois de France* after the original sources,

says that the first concern of Louis-le-Débonnaire, after the death of his august father, "was to cleanse and reform the said court of that ordure, knowing that it infected the whole Empire or realm." A capitulary which we still possess (Baluze., Volume II, col. 1198 and 1563) casts a weird light upon the penalty for libertinism. Every woman convicted of having led a scandalous life was thereby condemned to run about the country for forty days, nude from her head to her girdle, with a sign on her forehead announcing the reason for her sentence. Anyone had the right to accuse a woman of Prostitution, adultery, or any other misdeed. The judge listened to the accusation and took cognizance of it; but the rôle of accuser carried with it certain inconveniences which tended to disgust those most inclined to this species of vengeance. The accuser was under the necessity of proving his charges by means of a judiciary proof, by the cross, by boiling water, by hot iron, or by combat. The accused woman was represented by a champion whom she paid conditionally. This champion, however assured he might be of his client, never underwent these tests on which depended the justification or condemnation of one of the parties without some uneasiness. Among these tests, that of the cross was the least dangerous and depended less on chance than on bodily strength of the parties. Those of the two adversaries, who, with a cross on his back, held it for the longest time in the attitude of Jesus crucified, won the case; the other paid a fine and endured the punishment which went with the crime of which he had accused another. Sometimes, the accused woman, unable to find a champion who would expose himself to the tests, was obliged to undergo them herself, and no account was taken of sex or bodily weakness. It was especially in the test of the cross that a woman, however weak she might be, sometimes had the advantage. Thus, this test was employed by preference, when a husband, accused of impotence by his wife, might prove that he had done his conjugal duty. The proof by congress was no longer in existence at the time the council of Verberia (757) formulated this canon, in which the separation of the impotent husband from his wife is decreed: *Si qua mulier proclamaverit quod vir suus nunquam cum eâ coisset; exeant inde ad crucem, et si verum fuit, separentur*. The Empress Judith herself, being accused of adultery with Bernard, Count of Barcelona, offered to justify herself by fire or by combat; but her enemies, who were none other than the sons of her husband, Louis-le-Débonnaire, recoiled before such a



mode of possible justification and forced their father and their step-mother to retire each to a convent. Sometimes a woman accused of debauchery preferred, although innocent, to submit to the penalty rather than to expose herself to the terrible test by judiciary duel.

One of the most remarkable examples of these tests in the case of Prostitution took place about this time (858), on the occasion of the divorce of Lothair, King of Lorraine. This Prince, the second son of the Emperor Lothair, had loved a young girl named Waldrade, reared in the imperial gynaeceum of Aix-la-Chapelle, before he had married Theutberge, daughter of the Count Boson; but he could not accustom himself to living apart from his former mistress, and so returned to a place near her in one of his Alsatian domains and, when Waldrade had given him a son, he desired to break his legitimate marriage. Witnesses appeared who accused Theutberge of having had incestuous relations with her brother, Hucbert, of having become pregnant by him, and of having done away with her offspring. These witnesses, evidently incited by Lothair and Waldrade, pretended to be exceedingly well informed regarding the secret details of this incest, and attributed to Hucbert the most abominable indecencies, while failing to explain how Theutberge, who had submitted to him, had been able to conceive a child.\* Following are the strange details into which the venerable Hincmar does not fear to enter (*Opera*, Volume I, page 568): *Frater suus cum eâ masculino concubitu inter femora, sicut solent masculi in masculos turpitudinem operari, scelus fuerit operatum, et inde ipsa conceperit. Quapropter, ut celaretur flagitum, potum hausit et partum abortivit.* The *Annals* of Saint-Bertin confirm the same fact, without giving us to understand that an unnatural relation had borne fruit: *Fratem suum Hucbertum sodomitico scelere sibi commixtum.* The Queen Theutberge chose a champion, or *vicar*, who submitted in her behalf to the judgment by hot water. The vicar heard mass, went to communion, changed his apparel for the tunic of a deacon, drank a mouthful of holy water and waited till the water was boiling in the cauldron; a stone having been dropped into it, he plunged his arm into the hot water and drew out the stone; his arm was immediately wrapped in a sack, on which the judge fixed his seal; at the end of three days the sack was opened, and the arm being found intact, Theutberge was justified and returned to the royal couch.

\**Translator's Note*:—Allusion being (in the Latin passage immediately following) to relations *inter femora*.

But Lothair and Waldrade still wanted a divorce. They contested the validity of the test and demanded a new and more decisive one. Finally, to cut matters short, Lothair, in the month of January, 860, convoked sixty devout men in a solemn consistory over which he himself presided at his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle. Theutberge appeared before this assemblage and confessed that her brother, Hucbert, had, as a matter of fact, abused her by employing violence (*non tamen sua sponte, sed violenter sibi inlatum*, says the Acts of the council of Aix, *Conc. de Labbé*, Volume XIII, col. 696). In a second consistory, assembled the following month, Theutberge appeared once more and renewed her confession. "I now confess," she said, "that my brother, the clerk Hucbert, has corrupted me from my earliest infancy and has committed on my person, immodest acts against nature (*confiteor quia germanus meus Hucbertus clericus me adolescentulam corrumpit et in meo corpore, contra naturalem usum, fornicationem exercuit et perpetravit*). Theutberge was condemned to leave her husband and to do penance in a convent, but she soon retracted her confession and addressed to Pope Nicolas I a protest against the condemnation to which she had been unjustly subjected. The Pope charged two bishops to restrain King Lothair from "rotting in the sty of lust (*in luxurie stercore putrefieri*, says the letter of Nicolas I)" and to take charge of the investigations of a council which assembled at Metz to act as a court of last resort in this affair. The council confirmed the sentence of the first judges. Then the pope hurled an anathema at King Lothair. "If ever," he said, "one might call *king* one who, far from subduing his appetites by a salutary régime, yields to the illicit impulses of an unmanning lubricity. . . ." He revoked the decision of the council of Metz by declaring that "It is less a council than a place of prostitution, since it favors adultery (*tanquam adulteris faventem prostibulum appellari decernimus*)." Lothair paid no attention to the anathema of the holy father, and kept Waldrade; but the Pope appealed to all sovereigns and all kings to combat King Lothair with temporal and spiritual arms. "The layman who has at the same time a wife and a concubine, is excommunicated," wrote Nicolas and his followers in tracts which shook Christendom. "One may not dismiss his legitimate wife in order to take another or to replace her with a concubine. It is not permitted to repudiate one's wife under any pretext, except for cause of fornication." To these formulas of the canonical law, Lothair made response that his wife

had been a prostitute before their marriage. Adon, Archbishop of Vienne, then replied: "A husband is not entitled to demand a divorce when he has married a woman already deflowered, after he has lived with her for a long time without the least recrimination."

Lothair persisted in his concubinage with Waldrade; but he saw himself menaced by the armies of his neighbors, while that Hucbert, to whom he had attributed such vile habits, had left his Abbey of Saint-Maurice et Saint-Martin to come and demand an explanation from his brother-in-law of the atrocious calumnies concerning his sister and himself. Hucbert was slain at the moment of victory, and an envoy of the Pope came to summon Lothair to be reconciled with his legitimate spouse and to expel his concubine. Lothair yielded; but he had no sooner taken back Theutberge than she fled a second time to Charles the Bald for safety. Nicolas I solemnly excommunicated Lothair, who put up a last show of resistance by accusing his wife of adultery, and offering to prove the accusation by duel. This extreme measure did not succeed, and he sent back his dear Waldrade to the Abbey of Remiremont. Nicolas had called him to Rome to be relieved of his excommunication; Lothair learned en route that Nicolas was dead and that Adrian II had succeeded him. This new Pope was not less inflexible than his predecessor; he awaited King Lothair in a convent, and made the King swear, before admitting him to the Holy Table, that he had not had with the excommunicated Waldrade any cohabitation, carnal intercourse or relations of any sort. Lothair, although he had three children by his concubine, swore brazenly all that the Pope desired. The latter, in presenting the bread and wine to the perjured King, said to him once more: "If you feel yourself innocent of the crime of adultery, if you are possessed of a firm resolution not to cohabit more with your concubine Waldrade, approach with confidence and receive the pledge of eternal salvation for the remission of your sins; but if you propose to wallow again in the mire of Prostitution (*ut ad moechae dolutabrum redeas*, says the *Annals of Metz*) beware of taking any part in the Sacrament, lest this remedy of the soul be your condemnation." Lothair committed the sacrilege, and hastened to depart to go find Waldrade; but he never saw her again, being overtaken on the way by a sudden death, which alone prevented him from falling back into his former excesses (August 8, 869). Concubinage, authorized by the Salic law and the other codes of the Barbarians, had resisted for more than

three centuries Catholic discipline and that equality of the woman with the man which had been proclaimed by the Gospel; and now, at length, it found itself established in the institution of Christian marriage.



## CHAPTER XLIII

WE MUST come down to the reign of Louis VIII in order to discover an ordinance of the king relative to Prostitution; but we are not to conclude from the absence of special regulations on the matter for more than three centuries that the state of manners rendered such regulations unnecessary, and that public Prostitution had disappeared in France under the moralizing influence of the Church. In the lack of those monuments of ancient jurisprudence, which may perhaps have existed, but which are no longer to be found in the collections of royal documents, we still are able to see from the statements of contemporaries, that manners were never more corrupt, and that there had never been a greater need of reform, repression and amendment. During this period of wars, invasions and social upheaval, the works of legislation are very rare, and are distinguishable by a transient character which prevented them from surviving the circumstances which gave them birth; there is no general code which bears witness to the desire to lay a stable foundation, such a desire as is to be found in the Capitularies of Charlemagne and the ordinances of St. Louis. The kings succeeded one another too rapidly and felt that they were too uneasily seated upon their thrones to dream of organizing, ameliorating and properly administering their States; they had neither the time nor the desire to modify the institutions of their predecessors; one might therefore say, with every appearance of certitude, that from the time of Charlemagne to St. Louis, the policing of Prostitution was at a standstill, whereas Prostitution, itself, encouraged by the indifference of the magistrates, did not cease to spread and take root among the people. We shall not endeavor to discover traces of legal precautions, of coercive and prohibitive regulations in the interest of public manners; but we shall, nevertheless, have little difficulty in proving that those manners were detestable in this period of barbarism, ignorance, brutality and universal disorder.

The most shameful corruption had penetrated the majority of convents at the time of the Merovingians. In 742, St. Boniface, Bishop of Mayence, wrote to Pope Zachary (Act. SS. ord. L. Bened., Vol. II, page 54): "The bishoprics are almost always given to laymen

avid of wealth or to debauched and prevaricating clerics, who enjoy them in worldly fashion. I have found, among those who are called deacons, men accustomed from infancy to debauchery, adultery and the most infamous vices; they have by night four or five concubines in their beds, and even more (*inveni inter illos diaconos quos nominant qui a pueritia sua semper in stupris, semper in adulteriis et in omnibus semper spurcitiis viam ducentes, sub tali testimonio venerunt ad diaconatum; et modo in diaconatu, concubinas quatuor, vel quinque, vel plures noctu in lecto habentes*).” The reformers of the religious orders could do nothing but endeavor to halt the evil without destroying it in principle. St. Colomban, who promulgated his rule about this time, had introduced into it this severe clause: “He who shall have had familiar converse with a woman, tête-à-tête and without witnesses, shall be put on bread and water for two days or shall receive two hundred blows of the lash.” The most rigorous rule, however, was promptly relaxed in the bosom of a community where the fire of the sensual passions incessantly smouldered. It was always by way of incontinence that scandal in the monastic life began. The councils and the synod, with their wise prescriptions, were unable to impose a restraint upon the passions of the monks, passions the more irresistible for being restrained; they knew, as St. Jerome energetically remarks, that the power of the Devil is hidden in the loins (*diaboli virtus in lumbis*); they forced themselves to put woman far from their eyes and thoughts; they understood that the legitimate wives of bishops and priests, accepted by the primitive Church, were but occasion to sin. “Are we to suffer,” wrote Veranus, Bishop of Lyons, in one of his *Assemblies* (in 585), “are we to suffer the servant of the altar, the man given the honor of approaching the Holy of Holies, to be defiled by the unworthy delights of carnal pleasures, or are we to suffer a cleric, alleging the rights of marriage, to fill at once the duties of priest and the rôle of husband?” The *bishopesses* (*episcopae*) disappeared by degrees and were no longer tolerated; absolute celibacy became the indispensable condition of ecclesiastics, and the entering of a monastery of men was forbidden to women, as the entering of a convent was to men.

But all this was but a dead letter; the authority of the Church over its ministers was no greater than that of a law, which it always had the right to make, and which it never had the power to put into execution; the convents, as a natural consequence of human passions,

were for the most part receptacles of impurity, and it became necessary, two or three times a century, to introduce into them a partial or complete reform. Such is the history of nearly all the monasteries, where scandal did not break out every time that debauchery took possession of the community. Nothing was known, as a rule, of what took place on the inside of the cloister, except by vague and distant rumors. When the bishop judged it proper to inquire into the evil and to find a remedy for it, the investigation would reveal grave disorders over which Christian modesty demanded that the episcopal mantle be extended. The principal cause of these excesses of the monastic life was the proximity of houses of the other sex and visits paid to them; in one, the abbot or the prior had the direction of the religious; in the other, the abbess exercised a sort of sovereignty over her subjects. This constant proximity of the two sexes in the abbeys brought with it a throng of abuses which episcopal foresight endeavored in vain to prevent, for they were always creeping up again. The manners of those of the cloister exercised a deplorable influence over the laity, who did not pride themselves upon being as virtuous as their confessors; the secular clergy did not set any better example to their parishioners. Martinien, monk of Rabais, in the tenth century, said to the priests of his time: "Is it your law to take a wife or to have relations with women? To pollute, by different sorts of lusts, your bodies made to receive the bread of angels?" This Martinien, in his unpublished treatise, which he maliciously entitled *De Laude Monachorum*, reproached his companions of the cloth with "living like dissolute troopers, in place of arming themselves with the incorruptible sword of chastity and adorning their hands with good works." Père Berthollet, in his great *History of Luxembourg*, is forced to confess, Jesuit as he is, that the clergy in the eleventh century had forgotten the sanctity of their profession, and no longer remembered that continence which had once been the glory of the Church. "Living like the people, they believed that there was no distinction between themselves and the laity, and they easily persuaded themselves that they ought to have wives." It was these depraved clerics who were called the children of Goliath (*cleri ribaldi, qui vulgo dicuntur de familia Goliae*, in the *Constitutions* of Gautier de Sens, in 923). The wholesome portion of the clergy was desolated at beholding the progress of this moral gangrene, which nothing seemed to stop. Turpio, the pious Bishop of Limoges, who died in

944, left in his will (*Biblioth. Cluniacensis*) this frank confession: "We ourselves, who should set an example, we are the instruments of the damnation of others, and in place of being the pastors of the people, we conduct ourselves like devouring wolves!"

This is not the place to reveal the gross vices of the clergy, who believed that everything was permissible to them for the reason that they held in their hands the right of absolving sinners; we shall not attempt to uncover the archives of the convents or to give the long list of those that were reformed, excommunicated or suppressed on account of the monstrous carryings-on of their inmates. It is sufficient to say that perhaps there was not to be found a celebrated abbey in which cloistral manners had not experienced, on various occasions, the contagion of impudicity. To cite a few examples among a thousand of this sort, the monks of Moyen-Moutier and of Senones (*Sens*) in Lorraine led an existence so frightful, in the tenth century, that they were expelled by order of the Emperor of Germany, but their successors merely surpassed them in the science of debauchery. In the manuscript *Chronicle* of Jean de Bayon, which M. Noël possesses in his library at Nancy, we see that the monks of Moyen-Moutier were stirred by the heresy of a Greek eunuch named Nicetas, who had established at Constantinople the castration of all novices destined for monastic life. These corrupting monks, who carried on an infamous commerce with the young of the country, whom they attracted by night to their cells, imagined that the heresy of Nicetas would result in depriving them of the source of their pleasures; they therefore charged their abbot Humbert, to go to Constantinople to combat a heresy which they feared for themselves, and the abbot performed his delicate mission to the general satisfaction, for he saved the virility of the monks by wiping out the heresiarch in a dialogue in which he convicted him of desiring to change the servants of God into priests of Cybele. On his return, he found that his abbey had profited by his absence to make one step the more toward perdition; he thought to frighten these perverse ones by threatening them with the pains of hell. "When I was crossing the Alps," he told them, "I met a troop of demons, mounted on flaming horses. They were escorting the soul of Gobuim, Bishop of Chalon, who had just been taken by death at the very moment he was committing the sin of fornication with a nun. I asked the chief of the demons if it would not be possible to redeem this poor soul by means of prayers;



but the evil spirit to whom I spoke replied with a terrible burst of laughter and turned his back on me, while all the devils showed me their behinds with indecent gestures." The monks to whom this recital was addressed imitated the vile pantomime of the demons and thanked their abbot for having triumphed over the heresy of Nicetas by saying: "It is for us to prove now that a good monk does not need to be a good eunuch, and that a good eunuch cannot be a good monk."

We shall not take our readers from convent to convent, by way of initiating them into the culpable excesses which took place in those institutions; it is sufficient to picture the cloisters as dens of Prostitution (*scortationis fornices*, says a monastic writer of the eleventh century). Gregory VII, who endeavored to bring the Church in France back to a respectable mode of life, wrote to the bishops, in 1074: "With you, all justice is trampled under foot. The most shameful actions, the cruelest, the filthiest and most intolerable, are committed with impunity; and these actions have become habits." The indignation of this papal legislator is understandable, when we see Mauger, Archbishop of Rouen, committing crimes which, according to the expression of Guillaume of Poitiers, exhaled about him the odor of shame; when we see an Enguerrand, Bishop of Laon, turning into ridicule temperance and purity "with expressions," says Guibert de Nogent, "worthy of the most licentious juggler;" when we see a Manasses, Archbishop of Rheims, who was, according to one of his contemporaries, "a filthy beast, a monster with not a single virtue to redeem his vices;" or when we see a Hugues, Bishop of Langres, who defiled himself with adulteries and sodomy (*sodomitico etiam flagitio pollutum esse*, we read in the Acts of the Synod of Rheims, where he was brought to judgment). All these unworthy prelates received a condign punishment, but their fatal example was none the less followed by the greater number of clerics, who were astonished at the severity of the Decretals of Gregory VII: "He is a heretic and a senseless wretch!" cried the members of the diocese of Mayence (in the *Chronicle* of Lambert Schaffn). "Would he oblige men to live like celestial creatures and, contrary to nature, to tighten the rein on debauchery and fornication? We would rather renounce the priesthood than renounce marriage."\* Nearly all were married or kept concubines, mistresses, women friends and servants. Yves of

\**Translator's Note*.—Which was the way Martin Luther felt.

Chartres, in his letters (*Epist.* 85) cites a certain prelate who cohabited publicly with two women, and who was preparing to take a third (*qui publice sibi duo scorta copulavit et tertiam pellicem jam sibi prae-paravit*). Despite pontifical decrees, the clergy persisted for a long time in concubinage and refused stubbornly to renounce their pleasures (*se pellicibus ad hoc nolunt abstinere nec pudicitiae inhaerere*, says Orderic Vital). The same historian tells us that the Archbishop of Rouen, having excommunicated those who dwelt in incontinence, was pursued by these latter with stones. Bastards of the priests and monks vastly multiplied, and their fathers did not blush to dower, marry and enrich them at the expense of the Church. There was not a chapter in which the canons did not "burn with the ardors of lust" (*Gall. Christ.*, Volume I, Append., page 6); there was not a diocese which could count ten priests who were sober, chaste, peaceful and charitable, exempt from all crime, all infamy and all defilement (*Fulb. Carnot. Epist.* 17); there was not a convent in which the rule of order was scrupulously observed, or where the fathers who wore the monastic habit were truly monks. "*O miseri*," said the monk Martinien, "*nos monachiali habitu induti, videmur monachi et non sumus!*"

The depraved conduct of the priests and monks was but all too well imitated by the laity. The latter indulged in contemptible raileries at the expense of the monks, but the clergy did not seek even to preserve the appearance of decency; they cheapened their own vices with jugglers who made light of them in their satiric songs, and with painters who composed pictures and miniatures. This was a favorite theme of literature and of art. The intemperance of the monastic tribe, their sensuality, their effrontery, served as a permanent subject for the fantasies of artists and the epigrams of poets. The men of the Church appeared to be by no means offended, irritated or scandalized by written or plastic portraits of their turpitudes. They amused themselves at their own expense by causing the joyous epic of clerical life to be reproduced in the paintings of their missals, in the sculptures of their churches, in the images of their diptychs and in the ornaments of their furniture. The caustic gift of the carvers of images played relentlessly with the excesses of the clerics; hence so many gross allegories, the many indecent caricatures, the many filthy drolleries hidden in the capitals, the friezes and the arabesques of religious architecture. Now we have monks changed into pigs;

now pigs dressed as monks; sometimes the ancient phallus protrudes from the frock of a religious; sometimes it is nuns in debauchery with devils; sometimes it is apes pursuing naked women and biting their buttocks. The ordinary emblem of the vice of impurity was a toad or the head of a chimaera covering the sexual part of the man or woman. In all these obscene groups, the robe and hood of the monk express the malicious intention of the author, who amuses himself by immortalizing the vice and shame of his patrons. These latter were the first to laugh at his work, since they left standing those scandalous reliefs, the majority of which were destroyed in modern times through the prudery of the ecclesiastics, who declined to spare these all too life-like works. That is why the weirdest of these capitals, those portraying all varieties of the crime of bestiality, are no longer known to us except by the statement of archaeologists and scholars. Thus, there is not, so far as we know, even a drawing of an indecent sculpture which was to be seen at Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and which represented a religious prostituting herself at once with a monk and an animal which resembled a wolf. There was also at Saint-Georges-de-Boche a shaft of a column which was crowned with a frightful *mêlée* of men and apes vying with one another in incontinence and in audacity.

The laymen, in the presence of these models of clerical lust, did not pretend to remain pure and virtuous; they prided themselves, on the contrary, on a sort of libidinous emulation. The historians of the age picture the clerics for us as scorpions and serpents with human faces. (*Hist. des Comtes de Poitou*, by J. Besly, page 264). It is easy to understand how this general depravity led to a belief in the end of the world and in the reign of the Anti-Christ. This superstitious belief, which was prevalent in the year 1000, did not serve to render society less corrupt. Everyone, despite the terrors inspired by the approach of the last judgment, was stubborn in pursuing his joyous manner of life and in enjoying the delights of the flesh (*carnales illecebrae*). The world went from bad to worse, and there was a general expectation of a second deluge (*videbatur sane mundus declinare ad vesperam*, says Guillaume of Tyre, in Book I of his *History*). The poets were in agreement with the preachers in asserting that the human species had made a frightful progress in crime, and that moral decadence was becoming more pronounced every day. A troubadour of the tenth century, cited by Raynouard

(*Poésies orig. des Troub.*, Volume II, page 16), says, in a poem in the Romance language:

*Enfans en dies foren ome fello,  
Mal ome foren, aora sunt peior.*

All the writers of the time are in agreement as to the profound degradation of society, and all of them assign as the principle cause the sin of incontinence, which had assumed gigantic proportions. Some, in giving their goods to the churches and the monasteries, in the expectation of the Anti-Christ, were animated at once by credulity and a spirit of meanness: *iniquitas quotidiana malitiae incrementa sumit*, one reads in connection with a donation made to the church of Saint Jean d'Angely. The donors felt so laden with defilement that they even ruined themselves in order to purchase absolution, which they often received from the hands of a cleric more defiled than themselves. "One then saw," says Raoul Glaber, in his *Chronicle* (Book IV, Chapter 9), "everywhere, in the church as in the world, a contempt for justice and for laws. Everyone gave himself to the transports of passion. . . . The word of the Apostle might justly have been applied to our nation: 'There are among you so many impurities that one does not hear it said that the like are committed among the pagans.' " Orderic Vital, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Book VIII, year 1090), charges the contemporary generation with taking a delight in what had been looked upon as most shameful in times past. It is safe to say that, the end of the world and the Anti-Christ having made a rendezvous for the year 1000, those who survived that fatal date believed themselves authorized to fear nothing more in the way of Celestial vengeance, and so hurled themselves more than ever into the pigpen of their unclean pleasures.

We find here and there a few precise details relative to the nature of these pleasures, details ordinarily disguised under vague generalities, pertaining to pleasures not different from the other works of the Devil, if we are to believe the lamentations they inspired in the few honest folk of those perverse centuries. "Now," cries an anonymous poet in a complaint written in leonine verse upon the evil of the times (*Histor. des Gaules*, Volume XI, page 445), "now we have men who lead a scandalous life, debauchees, sodomites and robbers, those who injure and despise honest folk of well regulated



manners." Debauchery and sodomy (*moechi, sodomitae*) are, then, the vices which are the most widespread among all classes of the population, in the homes of counts and barons, as in the humble *borde* of the serf, in the shadow of the cloisters as in the chambers of the abbot or the archbishop. The Deacon Pierre, at the council of Rheims in 1049, delivered in the name of Pope Leo IX, a discourse in which priests and laity received a lively reprimand for their abominable habits. These habits had become so inveterate in France that Henri, Abbot of Clairvaux, wrote to Pope Alexander III in 1177: "Ancient Sodom is springing up from her ashes!" (See the *Hist. de Paris*, by Dulaure, edition of 1837, Volume II, page 40.) Orderic Vital, in a number of places in his *History*, draws attention to the contagion of this odious vice, which owed its recrudescence to the establishment of the Norman races in the Gallo-Frankish provinces. "Then," he says, in Book VIII, "the effeminates were dominant in all the land, and gave themselves without a bridle to their filthy debaucheries; the *chattemites* deserving of the flames, impudently abused the horrible inventions of Sodom (*tunc effeminati passim in orbe dominabantur, indisciplinate debacchabantur, sodomiticisque spurcitiis foedi catamitae, flammis urendi, turpiter abutebantur*)." The same historian has this invasion of sodomy prophesied by a famous anchorite, whom Queen Matilda, wife of William of England, sent to consult in Germany. The anchorite predicted the evils which threatened Normandy under the reign of Robert, son of William and grandson of Robert the Devil. "This Prince," he says, "like a lascivious cow, shall abandon himself to pleasures and idleness, shall seize the ecclesiastical goods and shall distribute them among his lenons and his infamous flatterers (*spurcisque lenonibus aliisque lecoribus distribuet*) . . . In the duchy of Robert, the catamites and the effeminates (*catamitae et effeminati*) shall rule, and under their domination perversity and misery shall only increase." It is, then, undeniable that the vice of sodomy, which had been revived by the Crusades, had been introduced into France by the Normans, who left it as a mark of their passage in all the places where they sojourned, either to take up winter quarters, or to await the return of their devastating hordes.

Abbom, in his poem on the *Siege of Paris* by the Normans, imputes to the French lords the ignominious vice which we have preferred to attribute exclusively to their enemies. These men of the north,

like the majority of the Barbarians, had no shame in giving themselves mutually to an abominable Prostitution; they made but a very moderate use of their women, who were constantly pregnant or nursing, and who had no other purpose than that of parentage; for the tribe, whose strength depended upon the number of its children, demanded an exuberant production, which would not have favored the habit of voluptuous relations between husband and wife. Such was, certainly, the origin of these degrading aberrations on the part of the masculine sex. The Normans were not less ardent with regard to women, and they did not spare them any more than the men, in the villages which they occupied suddenly and by force. They respected only the old, that is to say, those whom they slew without pity; but as to the young, they had a great need of those, and shared them among themselves, taking their victims with them, after they had employed them for their own pleasure, from under the eyes of their husbands, who would not have dared to be offended or to offer any opposition. The monk Richer, relating an expedition of the Normans, who devastated Brittany in the ninth century, shows them taking away men, women and children: "They decapitated the old of both sexes," he says, "putting the children into servitude and violating those women who impressed them as being beautiful *feminas vero, quae formosae videbantur, prostituunt*)." One may thus form an idea of the terror which attached to the name of Norman and which preceded their approach; they depopulated entire provinces; villages which were flourishing before their appearance were left without inhabitants when they departed; banks of rivers which they had ascended in their flat-bottomed boats were changed into deserts; but they had left along the way a lesson in bad morals, and the vanquished preserved the hideous mark which their conquerors had branded upon them. The Normans, in settling upon the soil of England, did not treat the indigenous population of that country with any more regard than they had shown in the land conquered by Rollo; they no longer massacred the old, but they abused the young and outraged the girls, the noblest of whom served as playthings to the soldiers in the filthiest fashion imaginable (*nobiles puellae despiciabilium ludibrio armigerorum patebant et ab immundis nebulonibus oppressae dedecus suum deplorabant*, says Orderic Vital). One may presume that Norman manners had not greatly improved in the course of two centuries, and that the senseless libertines always

knew how to get along without their wives, for the latter, during the long absence of their husbands, felt inflamed with concupiscence (*saeva libidinis face urebantur*, says the Latin, which is still more energetic than the French), and they would send to the absent more than one message (in the year 1068) to announce the fact that they were of a mind to take other husbands if their own delayed returning. The fear of seeing bastards emerge from their conjugal beds would sometimes decide the Normans to return to their impatient wives (*lascivis dominibus suis*); but the greater number remained in England, where they found sufficient in the way of distraction and consolation. If their wives did not all remarry, they did not fail to provide bastards for their husbands. A poet of this period (see *Hist. Norm. script.*, page 683) groaned at seeing that "the lamp of virtue has been extinguished in Normandy."

The other provinces which made up feudal France were not at that time in a more satisfying situation from the point of view of manners. The lords made a show of all their vices and preserved no remnant of modesty. M. Émile de la Bedollière, in his learned *Histoire des Mœurs et de la Vie Privée des Français* gives us two episodes remarkable for the savage debauchery they reveal, a debauchery which characterized both sexes, among the nobles as among the serfs. In 990, the rumor spread that William IV, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitiers had had adulterous relations with the wife of the Viscount of Thouars, in whose home he had received hospitality. Emma, wife of William, took occasion to revenge herself on her rival. One day she perceived the latter riding horseback with few attendants in the neighborhood of the château de Talmont. Emma came running up with a large troop of squires and valets; she hurled the Viscountess to the earth, heaped insults upon her, and left her to be looked after by her followers. The latter seized the unfortunate lady and violated her in turn for one whole night, in obedience to Emma's orders, their mistress inciting them and looking on (*comitantes se quatenus libidinose nocte quae imminabat, tota ea abuterentur, incitat*). The following day, they cast her out, half naked and dying of hunger and fatigue. The Viscount of Thouars could neither complain nor revenge himself; he took back his dishonored wife, while William exiled his own in the château de Chinon. We see, in the year 1086, a rape less horrible in its circumstances, but likewise accomplished in the presence of witnesses. Ebles, heir of the Comte de Comborn

in Aquitaine, having attained his majority, proceeded to claim the castle and the lands which his uncle and guardian, Bernard, was holding from him. The latter refused to give them up. Ebles assembled his warriors and came to lay siege to the château, which Bernard in vain endeavored to defend. Ebles entered the place which his uncle had been forced to abandon, and there met his aunt named Garcilla, and at once, without disarming himself, in the face of all his companions, who looked on and applauded, he assaulted her (*pherui uxorem coram multis foedavit*). (See the *Hist. des Moeurs et de la Vie Privée des Francs*, Volume II, page 343 and Volume III, page 83, after two chronicles published in the *Bibliotheca Nova Manuscriptorum* of Labée.)

One is no longer astonished at these monstrous facts, and one comes to suspect still more frightful ones, if possible, when one thinks with disgust of the ancient *Penitentials*; it is in them that we must seek the hidden phases of Prostitution in the Middle Ages; it is in them that we find the sin of the flesh being sinned with the greatest audacity, a sin which was not confined to illicit unions between the two sexes, but which took its pleasure in the most execrably depraved caprices. Surely, as M. de la Bedollière says, "one would prefer to believe, for the honor of humanity that the horrors of the *Penitentials* were purely accidental" and that but rarely an echo of them was to be heard in the tribunal of penitence; but they reappear on every page in the writings of these *Penitentials*, which classify them according to the different degrees of culpability and of penalty. It is, then, certain that they were frequent and that they spread a latent corruption in all parts of the body social. We cannot refrain from recording these horrors of Prostitution, but we shall not relieve them of their Latin veil, and we shall not even borrow a translation, prudently excised, from those modern *Penitentials* which display a respect for the doctrine of the Church. We must distinguish in this primitive code of the confessional those facts which concern the most secret acts of marriage, those which have a bearing on incest, those which relate to debauches against nature, and, finally, those which refer to the crime of bestiality.

All that the Church had done to protect the purity of marriage was but evidence of all that was being done in the sanctuary of husband and wife against the moral object of this institution. It was but a venial sin if the married pair failed to consecrate the first



wedding night to practices of devotion (*eadem nocte pro reverentia ipsius benedictionis in virginitate permaneant*, says Reginon, Book II); if the husband who had slept with his wife had failed to wash himself before entering the Church (*meritus qui cum uxore sua dormierit, lavet se antequam intretin ecclesia. Penitentiel de Fleury*); if the woman had entered the church during her menstrual period (*mulieres menstruo tempore non intrent ecclesiam*); if the conjugal couch, during the same period, had been approached by the wedded pair (*in tempore menstrui sanguinis qui tunc nupserit; 30 dies poeniteat. Penitentiel d'Angers*); if they had failed to preserve an absolute continence, on Sundays, holy days, for three days before communion, and during the four weeks which preceded Easter and Christmas. But the sin became more grave and the penance longer when the married pair had given free rein to their obscene fancies, which were not absolved under the privileges of marriage (*si quis cum uxore sua retro nupserit, 40 dies poeniteat; si in tergo, tres annos, quia sodomiticum scelus est. Penitentiel d'Angers*). Carnal copulations in marriage were not to be other than a chaste and holy work, destined for the procreation of children, and not for the satisfaction of the senses. Such were the expressions of Jonas, Bishop of Orleans, in his Institute for Laymen: *Oportet ut legitima carnis copula causa sit prolis non voluptatis, et carnis commixtio procreandorum liberorum sit gratia, non satisfactio vitiorum.*

Incest under the most hideous forms became widespread; the son showed no respect to his mother; the mother herself did not respect the innocence of her own child; the brother did not respect the sister; the father polluted the daughter! But there were for these abominations penances of ten and fifteen years, during which the guilty one had to observe fasts and continence. (*Qui cum matre fornicaverit, 15 annis; si cum filia et sorore, 1?—Si adolescens sororem, 5 annos, et si matrem, 7, et quamdiu vixerit, numquam sine poenitentia, vel continentia. —Si mater cum filio parvulo fornicationem imitatur, si mater cum filio suo fornicaverit, tribus annis poeniteat. Penitentiels de Fleury et d'Angers.*)

Infanticides and abortions were not less numerous than among the pagans, who always tolerated and sometimes approved them. Sometimes they smothered the infant at birth, sometimes they strangled it, sometimes they poisoned it or bled it to death. There were men and women who sold drugs for purposes of abortion (*herb-*

*arii biri, mulieres interfectores infantum*). Other drugs rendered women sterile and men impotent. To exalt the love, or rather the sensual ardor, of a man or woman, frightful potions were compounded (*Interrogasti de illâ feminâ quae menstruum sanguinem suum miscuit cibo vel potui et dedit viro suo ut comederet? et quae semen viri sui in potu bibit? Tali sententiâ feriendae sunt sicut magi. Penitential de Raban Maur.—Illa quae semen viri sui in cibo miscet, ut inde plus ejus amorem accipiat, annos tres poeniteat. Penitential de Fleury*).

There were innumerable varieties among the sins against nature in the eyes of the confessor, who also applied to them many varied penances. Simple sodomy (*si quis fornicaverit sicut sodomitae*, says the Roman *Penitential*) carried with it four years of penance; but the age of the sinners made a great deal of difference. The child, the adolescent and the grown man did not all receive the same punishment, though they had sinned in the same fashion. The defilements of extreme youth resembled frequently those of the most depraved old age; but they were effaced more easily and were corrected with the years (*Pueri sese invicem manibus inquinantes, dies 40 poeniteat. Si vero pueri sese inter femora sordidant, dies centum; majores vero, tribus quadragesimis. Penitential d'Angers*). Unnatural vice among women was punished as severely as in the case of men, as though chastity were even more necessary in a sex possessed of an irresistible charm for attracting the other sex. The women, even the religious, indulged in orgies among themselves, in the course of which the Roman *fascinum* reappeared, while the art of the *fellator* still flourished as in antiquity (*Mulier cum altera fornicans, tres annos. Sanctimonialis femina cum sanctimoniali per machinatum polluta, annos septem. Penitential d'Angers.—Mulier qualicumque molimine aut per ipsam aut cum altera fornicans. Penitential de Fleury.—Si quis semen in os miserit, septem annos poeniteat. Ibid.*). Sometimes incest was mingled with crime against nature and aggravated at once the infamy of the chastisement; sodomy between brothers could only be redeemed by fifteen years' abstinence (*qui cum fratre naturali fornicaverit per commixtionem carnis, ab omni carne se abstineat quindecim annis. Penitential de Fleury*). All manner of bestiality figured in the *Penitentials* and called merely for a temporal penance, although the civil law condemned the criminal to perish with the beast that was his accomplice. All the beasts appeared to be subject to this detestable practice (*cum jumento, cum quadrupede, cum animalibus*, says the

Roman *Penitential*; *cum jumento, cum pecude*, says the *Penitential d'Angers*; *cum pecoribus*, says the *Recueil de Regionon*). Nothing was more common in the Middle Ages than this crime, which was punishable by death when it was patent, and when it had been confirmed by the sentence of a tribunal. The *Records of Parliament* are full of unfortunate ones burned with a dog, with a nanny-goat, with a cow, with a pig, or with a goose! We find in the letter of Raban Maur to Regimbold, Archbishop of Mayence, a canonical discussion of these enormities, which in those days astonished no one (*Tertia quaestio de eo fuit, qui cani feminae inrationabiliter se miscuit, et quarta de illo, qui cum vaccis saepius fornicatus est? Qui cum jumento vel pecore coierit, morte moriatur. Mulier quae succubuerit cuilibet jumento, simul interficiatur cum eo. Capitul. de Baluze, t. H, append., col. 1378*). In the *Capitularies* of Ansegise, the bishops and the priests are especially urged to combat this depravity, which is looked upon as a carry-over from paganism, holding out longer in the country than in the city; but all the legislators recognize the fact that such a crime, which puts man on a level with the beasts, is deserving of death. They would willingly have pardoned the beast rather than the man, but they killed the former and hurled its flesh into the sewer from fear that, through the cunning of the Devil, it would engender a monstrous concourse of men and beasts.

Finally, to give a still more complete idea of the obstinacy of the debauchees and their detestable habits, we shall recall here a criminal case which has to do with a debauch against nature of the sort known as *fornicatio inter femora*. It is Ducange who furnishes us with this singular document, taken from a charter of Edward I, King of England. This charter probably dates from the first years of the tenth century. A man named Simon kept a concubine named Matilda, with whom he had never had complete relations. One day, he was flagrantly surprised by his friends in the act of having illicit relations with this concubine, who took vengeance by insisting that he marry her. She declared before the judges that she had lived with him for long as his wife, but that he had never married her (*Juratores dicunt quod praedictus Simon semper tenuit dictam Matildam ut uxorem suam, et dicunt quod numquam dictam Matildam desponsavit*). Then Simon had to choose between three sorts of punishment or reparation: to plight his troth to Matilda, to lose his life, or to render to Matilda the duties which a husband owes his wife (*vel ipsam Matildam retro*

*osculare*).\* Simon made his choice at once: he plighted his troth to Matilda, but he did not care to marry her in any other manner than he had previously done (*inter femora*). Ducange has extracted this curious anecdote from the *Dictionary of the Laws of England (Nomolex Anglicana)* by Thomas Blount.

At the time of Edward I and Charles the Simple, his son-in-law, the manners of France and England presented a sad analogy; and some poet of the Saxon court of Edward might have said of England what the poet Abbom was then saying of France, in his famous poem on the *Siege of Paris*: "O France, why do you hide yourself? Where is your ancient strength, which once assured your triumph over the most powerful enemies? You are expiating three vices in chief: pride, the shameful delights of Venus, and lustful habits. You do not even put out of your bed married women or nuns consecrated to the Lord. What is more, you are satiated with your wives, and so you commit outrages against nature!" Two centuries later, Pierre, Abbot of Celles, in his letters (Book IV, Ep. 10), addressed to the city of Paris the same reproaches which Abbom had addressed to France, and he accused the city of perverting the manners of her inhabitants: "O Paris, you are a seducer and a corrupter! How many snares do your own vices spread for imprudent youth! How many crimes do you cause to be committed!" Prostitution was, in all ages, the provocative counsellor to other vices, which could not exist without her, and which fastened themselves upon her flanks, like young wolves hanging on the duds of their voracious mother.

\**Translator's Note*:—Literally, kiss her behind.



## CHAPTER XLIV

IF THE depravation of manners at this period of the Middle Ages exceeded anything which the most barbaric periods had countenanced in the way of debauchery and crime, legal Prostitution, carried on as an industry and as a safeguard to decent women by offering the sensual appetites a satisfaction that was readily procurable, this variety of Prostitution, regular and organized, no longer existed, at least in the eyes of the feudal police. It was admitted neither in principle nor in law. It could be practiced only fraudulently and in secret, at the peril of the women whom want or debauched instincts had encouraged to take up this vile trade; it by no means found any support or protection from the magistrates of the cities which had been converted into communes nor from seigniorial authorities. It was adjudged neither necessary nor useful and was looked upon as a public outrage to the decency of all. However, it was quite necessary to tolerate it and to wink at it as a brutal fact, to be met with everywhere, hiding, or rather disguising itself, despite the severest prohibitions, despite the most rigorous penalties. We are convinced that legal Prostitution was forced to conquer its shameful place in society, by its perseverance in braving the laws and their punishments, by its cleverness in assuming all masks, by its strength and its tenacity, by its vivacious and encroaching character. One might compare the situation of women of an evil life, in the midst of a society hostile to them, and which could not do without them, though it persecuted them continually, without ever succeeding in getting rid of them,—one might compare this abnormal condition to that of the Jews, who also had against them the civil and ecclesiastical legislation, and who every day were imprisoned, deprived of their goods, and expelled, and who yet came back continually to their banks, to their usuries, and to their enormous gains. Prostitution does not have an avowed and recognized, if not authorized, existence in the state, until the reign of Louis VIII, or perhaps that of Philip-Augustus, for the master of the revels (*rex ribaldorum*), who was, evidently, the supreme governor of the agents of Prostitution, was created by Philip-Augustus, as we shall see later.

It is quite difficult to determine the habits and character of this

mercenary Prostitution in an age of general corruption, which yet did not permit the free practice of this contemptible industry. The abbot, the bishop, the baron and the feudal lord might have in their house a species of seraglio or lupanar, supported at the expense of their vassals; according to the expression of a writer of the eleventh century, each possessor of a fief kept in his gynaeceum as many *ribaudes* as he did dogs in his kennel; but the public lupanar, open to every comer, under the direction of a male or female who profited from this obscene commerce, did not exist save in a small number of localities, where the seignioral and municipal administrations had permitted the relaxation of ancient customs and had feigned blindness in order to appear tolerant. It was, then, at Paris and in a few large cities that the establishment of bad houses in the suburbs and in certain designated quarters met with few obstacles, until the day when the scandal of the thing restored the vigor of the law and led to the more or less radical suppression of these centers of debauchery. There were also prostitutes who were not subject to the exploitation of the proprietor of a lupanar, and who kept all the profits they gained by the sale of their bodies; these mingled ordinarily with the respectable population, and although living by their disrespectable trade, they were careful not to let anything come out, under pain of falling at once into disgrace with their neighbors, and of being obliged to execute justice upon themselves by discreetly disappearing. It is natural that the life which went on in these bad houses and the private life of public women should have given rise to many echoes in the written monuments of these dark times. Prostitution from the eighth to the twelfth centuries does not possess many characteristics which distinguish it in a salient manner, although it differs absolutely from the Prostitution of the later Empire. We must be content for our picture with a few isolated and unrelated facts, which bear witness to the diversity of local customs. Moreover, these facts, furnished us by the charters of communes and the ordinances of the urban police, are too rare to enable us to form one vast ensemble. But it is only after such a collection of scattered and separate facts that it is possible to determine the secret manners of Prostitution in feudal France.

The popular language of the eleventh century, the Low Latin, which was to create the French language, by mingling with the dialects of the North and the Midlands, this language, applying new words

to new things and new ideas, presents us, in the very formation of these words, with a mass of precious information, in which we shall find many notions relative to our subject. From the end of the ninth century, the vocabulary of Prostitution had undergone a complete change; it is now singularly restrained but composed of locutions wholly new, which appear to have sprung from the mouths of the people rather than from the pens of writers; these locutions, bearing the imprint of the Gallo-Frankish mind and sometimes coined in the German idiom, are made to express what we shall call the *material* of Prostitution. It is clear that these Latin words had no sense except in connection with the particular circumstances which existed at the moment they were created; the people, in their everyday language, were unwilling to accept those words which were regularly employed in the literary language, but which no longer stood for anything in life; the people, with their own genius, then proceeded to create the expressions which were lacking and to give them their own special seal. Thus we see appearing in the vulgar Latin a majority of those words which are to receive later a Gallic transformation, and which have been preserved in the language of the people, for Prostitution could not aspire to have its own gross and impudent formulas and idioms accepted by the noble language. Let us remark, once for all, that the serious writers, the poets and the historians, continued to make use of those general terms which the classic Latin offered them in designating the acts and the personnel of Prostitution; but those documents coming from an unlettered hand or destined for popular consumption no longer employed any but precise and technical terms which were familiar to all and which did not demand, in order to be understood, the least notion of classical antiquity. Undoubtedly, this language of Prostitution is sordid and worthy of the things which it expresses and the persons whom it describes, but we must not forget that, in the Middle Ages all the words of everyday speech were equally esteemed and were made use of, without any reserve, in writings as in oral discourse. Certain expressions pertaining to infamous objects had not yet been branded with infamy, and no importance was attached to modesty of language, spoken or written. That is why our old French is so rich in ingenious or peccant words, which form the vocabulary of Prostitution, but which have been, since the century of Louis XIV, banished from the language of respectable folk, as one would formerly have said.

Prostitution, which the lettered always called *meretricium*, of which the innovators had made *meretricatio* and *meretricatus*, was called, among the people and in the vulgar language, *putagium*, and, by extension, *puteum* and *putaria*. This last word appears to have had an origin wholly modern, and despite the authority of the learned Scaliger, in one of his notes on the *Catalecta* of Virgil, we do not believe that *putagium* is to be derived from the Latin *putus*, which occurs in the Low Latin authors with a sense of *small*. Among the ancients, it is true, *putus* had been especially employed as a sign of affection, as a flattering epithet addressed to a young child. The master called his effeminate by no other name, and if it happened to be a girl in place of a boy, one said *puta*. The diminutives, *putillus* and *putilla*, were naturally formed, and Plautus, in his *Asinaria* (Act III, Scene 3), puts *putillus*, *my little one*, upon the same footing with *my dove*, *my cat*, *my swallow*, *my sparrow*, in the language of the amorous. One employed by preference, however, as Horace does (*Sat.*, I, II, 3), *pusus* and *pusa*, which also had their diminutives, *pusillus* and *pusilla*. Nevertheless, we would derive *putagium* from *puteus*, a well, for the reason that this etymology is equally justified in a literal or a figurative sense. If on the one hand, public Prostitution may be compared to a well, where each is free to go to draw water, on the other hand, in every city, in every quarter, the communal or seigniorial well was the rendezvous of all the women who were in search of adventure. There was always a well in the places frequented by the prostitutes, in the *Court of Miracles*, where they dwelt, and in the street where they held their fair. It will be remembered, perhaps, that Jesus Christ had met the Magdalen at a well.\* These wells, the use of which belonged to all the inhabitants of the place, provided each evening a meeting place for a numerous areopagus of women, who spoke among themselves of their amours, and who came there under pretext of laying in a supply of water. It was understood what was meant by going to the well; lovers came there from all sides to keep their trysts. The well was a witness of many sighs and many tears. Pignaoi, in speaking of the Well of Love, which had given its name to a street in Paris, situated near the rue de la

\**Translator's Note*.—Mr. J. U. Nicolson says: "This is to be questioned. The woman at the well was a woman of Samaria. See *John* IV, 1-30. For the woman taken in adultery, see *John*, VII, 1, 2. Whereas in *Luke*, VIII, 1, 2, the Magdalen appears as the woman out of whom seven devils were cast."



Truanderie, where Prostitution flourished, says that this famous well owed its name "to a reason which it shares in common with all the wells in the cities or habitable places, in that it serves as a rendezvous for valets and servants, who, under pretext of coming there to draw water, come there to make love." This well, which was not filled in till near the end of the seventeenth century, had been the witness of more than one amorous drama, and tradition recalled in divers fashions the history of a noble damoiselle of the Hellebic family who had been drowned in it under the reign of Philip-Augustus. A number of lovers also were cited, who had thrown themselves into it, out of spite or jealousy, without finding death. Other lovers, out of gratitude, had desired to give the Well of Love a share in their happiness: one renewed its bucket, another the cord; this one built an iron balustrade; this one put in a new curb, on which one might read in Gothic letters: *Amour m'a refait en 525 tout à fait* (Love rebuilt me in 525).

One might make a curious abstract of all the wells which have played a rôle in the history of Prostitution, and we would find one in almost every city, by way of demonstrating the fact that *putagium* in the Middle Ages was almost inseparable from the wells, the majority of which have disappeared today. One would find little difficulty in proving that wells of this sort have existed in Paris, in the streets or near the streets where dwelt the women of evil life. Let us content ourselves with recalling the fact that the *ribaudes de Soissons*, who enjoyed a proverbial celebrity in the twelfth century (*Dictons populaires*, published by Crapelet, page 64), held their assizes around the well which has survived their *ribauderie*. "The Court of Love, or the Celestial Court, of Soissons (as MM. P. Lacroix\* and Henri Martin call it in their *Hist. de Soissons*) is situated at the entrance of the rue du Pont; it is a narrow court, surrounded with low buildings, to which one mounts by exterior stone stairs. This court, which is entered by an obscure alley, formerly ran down to the river bank; in the middle is a well of singular construction, with, on the margin, a round, narrow orifice surmounted by a conical arch." We shall seek no other arguments to demonstrate the fact that *putagium*, *puteum*, and *putaria* implied the action of going by night to the Well of Love. *Putaria* was a preferred term in the midland provinces. We read in the statutes of the city of Asti (*Collat.* 12, Chapter 7): *Si uxor*

\*Translator's Note:—Our own author.

*alicujus civis Astensis olim aufugit pro putaria cum aliquo . . . Puteum* was more in use in the poetic language, which, taking cause for effect, made of *puteum* a synonym of *putagium*. As to this latter word, which must antedate the other, it was consecrated by being introduced into legal language. We find it frequently employed by the jurisconsults, and it figures in more than one ordinance of our kings of the third race; it is sufficient to mention one of these ordinances, in which it is said that *putagium* on the part of a mother does not take away from a son the rights of inheritance, provided always that the son is born in the state of legitimate marriage (*quod generaliter dici solet, quod putagium haereditatem non adimit, intelligitur de putagio matris*). The word *putagium* was only applied to the prostitution of a woman. The French language had no sooner stammered out certain words than it proceeded to translate *putagium* into *putage*, *puta* into *pute* and *putena* into *putain*.\* These last two words are contemporary, since the *Chronicle* of Orderic Vital makes mention, in Book XII, of the foundation of a city which was called *Mataputena* (*id est devincens meretricem*), in derision of the Countess Hedwige.

*Putage* occurs incessantly, with the sense of *putagium* in the old French language, especially in the romances and the fabliaux of the Trouvères. The citations, selected by Ducange, give the exact value of this expression, which has not even remained in every-day language, and which could not have been replaced by the words *putinage* and *putasserie*, which the vocabulary of the low peoples has preserved, without taking account of the nuances in their relative meanings. The two following verses from the romance of *Vacces* establishes the true acceptation of *putage*:

*Maint homme a essillié et torné à servage,  
Et mis par povreté mainte femme au putage.\*\**

\**Translator's Note*:—Mr. Nicolson: "Our author appears to have overlooked the Latin *putidus*, stinking, disgusting, from *putere*, to stink, allied to Sanskrit *púj*, to stink, and Danish *pute*, to put into, and Welsh *putiaw*, to put or thrust into, whence our verb, *to put*. Lacroix appears to insist on a derivation from *putus*, a boy, with a sense of small, or from *puteus*, a well. In the latter case, we are not lacking in metaphors comparing a whore to a well, in the sense of a pit, something bottomless. See the *Contes Drolatiques*. But if the derivation is from *puteus*, a well, there may here be the sense of a *pit*, into which something might be dropped or thrown and so lost. *A strange woman is a deep pit.* (*Proverbs*.)"

\*\**Translator's Note*:—The sense is: "Many a man has made a slave of many a woman and, taking advantage of her poverty, has put her to whoring (*au putage*)."

The romance of *Renard* lends to *putage* a sense which approaches that of *putanisme* in the modern language:

*Grant deshonnour et grant hontage  
Fistes-vous et grant putage.\**

The romance of *Amile et Amy* makes use of the same word to express the same thing:

*A mal putaige doit li siens cors liverez!*

Finally, the romance of *Athis* in making use of this word, so designates the state or condition of a woman who prostitutes herself:

*Et sa femme estoit mariée,  
Benoite ne espousée  
Qui puis la traïroit à putage,  
A mauvaistié ne à hontage  
Qu'on le fesist mourir à honte,  
Sans en faire nul autre conte.\*\**

We shall not multiply citations for the word *pute*, which has kept its original use and sense in the low language. This word always had an insulting sense, as we see in these verses from *Garin le Loherain*.

*Or, m'avez-vos lesdengiée vilment,  
Et clamé pute, oyant toute la gent.\*\*\**

We shall see later how this insult addressed to all women in general cost the poet Jean de Meung dearly.\*\*\*\*

*Lenocinium*, that faithful and inseparable companion of *meretrix*—

\**Translator's Note*:—"Great dishonor and great shame are yours, for you are guilty of great whoredom (*grant putage*)."

\*\**Translator's Note*:—"Whosoever shall lead a married woman into whoredom (*putage*), into evil or shameful ways, let him be put to a shameful death, without further ceremony."

\*\*\**Translator's Note*:—"You have vilely abused me and called me whore (*pute*) in the hearing of all."

\*\*\*\**Translator's Note*:—"This was the beginning of the famous *Querelle des femmes*.

*cium*, found more difficulty in changing its name; since it was ordinarily practiced by women, the name was at first transformed into *lenonia*, which in the language of the twelfth century was Gallicised and became *lenonine*, but the people who reigned sovereignly in the low-lands of language, soon invented another word, which they drew from the habits of the agents of Prostitution. This word was *maquerellagium*, from which comes the old French name *maquerellage*, which still exists in the language of the servant-hall and which yet has a place in the dictionary of the Academy. Before *maquerellagium*, the words *maquerellus* and *maquerella*, *maquereau* and *maquerelle* had been created. The most learned etymologists are rejoiced to discover the origin of these words, which have no Latin in them except their termination. Nicot and Lenage, in searching for analogies between the fish called *marquereau* and the man or woman who speculates in the Prostitution of another, have supposed that *marquereau* had been formed from *maculae* for the reason that the fish is variegated with black and blue transverse stripes, and for the reason that, among the ancients, the theatrical costume of the lenon, male or female, was also variegated with different colors. Tripaut, remembering that the *aquariolus* or Roman water-bearer, possessed the privilege of *lenocinium* has thought that the simple addition of an initial letter, due to the guttural pronoun pronunciation of the Franks, had produced *marquariolus*, which corresponds nearly enough with *maquerellus*. Others, with more naïveté, have hunted up the Hebrew verb *machar*, which signifies *sell*, and which is not inappropriate to the trade of one who sells human flesh. These last etymologists ought to cite in behalf of their deduction certain documents of the Middle Ages in which the vending of horses and women is attributed to the Jews.

We are astonished that scholars should preoccupy themselves with the etymology of the word as applied to man, before having found that of the one which is applied to fish: for it is altogether natural that the fish should have first been named *maquerellus* and that the man, by some similitude, should have been described by the name of this fish. What is the first etymology which presents itself to us, without any effort of the imagination, or any knowledge of linguistics? The fish called *maquereau* was once more abundant along the shores of the Ocean than it is today; it followed in the wake of herring banks and shared their fate after having lived at their expense. Its Danish



or Norman name, which is kept in the Dutch language,\* takes us back to the period when it was Latinized: *mackereel* is certainly older than *maquerellus* and *makarellus*. Scholars, dissatisfied with the barbaric consonants of this word, had corrupted it to render it less savage to the ear; there is no other explanation for the formation of *magarellus*, which appears in many charters of the kings of England. On the coasts of the North, one said *makevus*, or rather *makerus*, if it is permissible for us to suppose an error in Ducange. As to borrowing the name of the fish for the species of man who imitated its manners, this was at first a play on words, an epigram, which entered profoundly into the spirit of the popular language, and which lost by degrees its figurative sense. The people ended by forgetting what point of resemblance had caused them to confound the man with fish. It is, however, easy to understand that the lenon, hovering about women in order to draw profit from them and pushing them in a manner into the net of the corrupter, plays a rôle analogous to that of the *maquereau*, which escorts the herrings and fattens upon them. However this may be, this figurative expression designating procurers of one and the other sex had been universally admitted and did not even appear out of place in the ordinances of the kings of France. It has received since then its indecent stigma, but it is inveterate in the energetic language of the populace. It is, however, but the name of a fish to be seen upon all tables, and which formerly cost four deniers the thousand to the archbishop or count in whose suzerainty it arrived. If this fish had not received its name from the peoples of the North, we should not be far averse to accepting an etymology more ingenious than plausible, which would forge from the verb *moechari* the substantive *moecharellus*, to describe the instigator of debauchery (*moechi concilator*).

Like *lenocinium* and *meretricium*, the *lupanar* no longer possessed the *droit de cité* except in the language of writers; the vulgar language looked upon it as a Gallo-Romanism which had no reason for being. Nothing less resembled the lupanars of Rome than these dens of Prostitution in the cities of France. These infamous holes were described without distinction by the names of *borda* and *bordellum*,

\*Translator's Note:—J. U. N.: "The Danish is *makreel*, the Swedish *makrili* and the German *makrele*. Webster derives mackerel, a pimp, a bawd, from O. F. *maquereau*, from Danish *maker*, *makelaar*, a mediator, a broker, hence a go-between. Cf. O. H. G. *mahhari*, broker, agent, from *mahhôn*, to do. Cf. our *machinate*."

which cast *borde*, *bordel* and *bordeau* into the new dialect of the twelfth century. This Latin word is but the Saxon word *bord* Latinized; this Saxon word had no more to say than did the French word; indeed, it is identical with the latter. It is, then, a waste of the imagination to see in *bordel* the words *bord* and *el*, because, it is said, the places of debauchery were situated at the edge of the water! The situation of these bad houses was not inevitably near a river; there would have been no object in this, either moral or sanitary; and there is no other satisfactory explanation. But in many circumstances, Prostitution did find lodgings near the water, especially when river navigation brought a great throng of merchants, passengers and boatmen who became the ordinary customers of the *bordelières* (*bordellariae*). The term *borda* was given more especially to an isolated cabin, a lodging for the night, situated preferably beside a road or a river, beyond the walls of the city, in a suburb or in the open country. The *borde* was distinct from the *maison*, as we see in this verse from the romance of *Aubery*:

*Ne trouvissiez ni borde ne maison;*

and in this other verse from the romance of *Garin*:

*Ni a meson ne borde ne mesnil.*

Generally this *borde* was to be found annexed to a small close or to a field; for in a contract of the year 1292, cited by Ducange in his *Glossary*, it is stated that the abbot and the convent are obliged to concede an acre of land to every inhabitant of the city who desires to set up a *borde* (*ad faciendum ibi bordam*). Prostitution, expelled from the cities, took refuge in these *bordes*, which were to be found far from the eyes of the urban police, and which gave rise to no scandal. These rural residences were inhabited only in certain seasons and on certain days by the tenants or proprietors; but Prostitution found in them at all times an assured shelter; that is why the public women took a lease on the *bordes* where they resided, when they were not content to come there at dusk to make a sojourn of a few hours. The debauchees who went to meet them there would leave the city under pretense of a promenade and arrive at their shameful destination by a circuitous route. The *borde* became changed into *bordel*, its

diminutive, which became by imperceptible degrees a generic name for all the asylums of debauchery, whether in the country or in the cities. We may attribute to the variations of the *patois* the different forms which this name took, which was pronounced, *bordeel*, and which degenerated into *bordiau*, and *bourdeau*, *bordelet* and *bordeliau*.

While the *bordels* remained outside the cities, vagabond Prostitution numbered in its secret army a host of poor recruits, who did not even possess the means of renting a *borde*, and who, like the *lupae* and the *suburranae* of Rome, would stop passers-by along the road, behind the hedges, in the vineyards and the wheat-fields; they were called *women sitting in the hedges, those from the villages, daughters of the road, women of the fields*. (See Carpentier in his supplement to Ducange, on the words *borda* and *cheminus*). Those who did not leave their dens, but who laid their snares at the window were called *claustrariae*, *cloistrieres*. (See Carpentier, on the word *clausurae*.) Their cloisters, *claustra*, might well have been descendants of the *lustra* of antiquity, all the more so for the reason that the *claustra montium* were only established in isolated places, in the heart of the forests and in mountain gorges.

The lost women who found a dwelling in the *bordes* or *bordels* were designated by the epithet of *bordelières* or *bourdelières*. But this was not their only description; we have seen above that they were called *putes* and *putians*, as a sign of contempt. They were not spared insulting names, and they were not distinguished, as in antiquity, by descriptions which would frequently reveal their immodest habits, their mode of life, their origin and their costume. From the end of the twelfth century, they were called in bad part by the collective name of *garzia* or *gartia*, in French, *garce* or *garse*, which has come down to our days in the vocabulary of country folk to designate every sort of girl who is not married. We read in the *History of Bresse* by Guichenon (page 203): *Si leno vel meretrix, si gartio vel gartia alicui burgensi convitium dixerit*; and in the charter of privileges of the city of Seyssel in 1285: *Si gartia dicat aliquid probohomini et mulieri*. This expression which reappears on every page of prose and verse from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, loses only in exceptional cases its primitive sense, and does not become an insult except in certain cases in which it is accompanied by an evil-sounding epithet; for the rest, we see, from the extract of Guichenon cited above, that the description of *garce* (*gartia*), even when

employed in bad part, differed from that of prostitute (*meretrix*) in that it designated rather a vagabond girl, a *coureuse*, a servant girl. Et. Guichard, who desired to prove that all languages are descendants of the Hebraic, thought to connect the word *garce* with the Hebrew verb, analogous in sound and signifying *to prostitute oneself*. He failed to remark the fact that the words *garce* and *garzia* are far more ancient than the obscene signification which has been given them; thus, in the *procès-verbal* of the life and miracles of St. Yves, in the thirteenth century, *garcia* is found to have the sense of servant maid, *ancilla*. (See the Bollandists, *Sanct. maii*, Volume IV, 553.) It is a good deal more simple to say that *garce* is the feminine of *gars*, which, despite the nicest etymologies, would appear to be a Gallic word, *wars*, and to have signified first of all a young warrior, a marriageable male. *Gars* became Low Latin *garsio* and *garzio*, applied to valets, to thieves, to worthless folk, to camp followers of the army, and to libertines. One could not better show how a word originally honest and decent, comes gradually to be perverted and to take on a shameful signification than by recalling a phrase in which Montaigne employs this word with the acceptation which it had in his time: "The result is a nation in which *garces* are prostituted at the doors of temples in order to assuage concupiscence."

This was not the only insulting expression which was made use of in the Middle Ages to designate prostitutes; they were called *fornicariae* and *fornicatrices*, *prostibulariae*, *prostantes*, *gyneciariae*, *lupanariae*, *ganeariae* in the Low Latin. These last three names were synonymous; they indicated the places where women of an evil life kept themselves, *genea*, *lupanar* and *gynecium*. The *prostantes* sold themselves (from the verb, *prostaræ*), the *prostibulariae* prostituted themselves, the *fornicariae* fornicated, the *fornicatrices* seduced to fornication. These different terms did not pass over into the French language, but those which had less of the Latin turn did: hence *ribaude*, *meschine*, *femme folle*, *femme de vie*. The *femme de vie*, *femina vitae*, appears to us, despite its Latin disguise, to have, for root, a Gallic obscenity. The *femme folle*, or *folieuse*, *mulier follis*, or *fatua*, owed her name to that famous Festival of Fools which we shall describe elsewhere as a last reflection of the mysteries of ancient Prostitution. The *meschine* was, in principle, a little servant maid, a slave girl; the *ribaude* was a woman who followed the army, a trooper's girl, a camp-follower's woman. We shall describe in another



chapter the *ribauds* of Philip Augustus, when we come to establish the true origin of the word *roi* (king). We shall not report here the numerous etymologies which have been learnedly accumulated with regard to the root of the word *ribaud*, which exists in all the languages of Europe. We are sufficiently disposed to see this root in the Gallic word *baux* or *baud*, which signifies *joyous*, and which has left in our old tongue the substantive *baude*, joy, and the verb *ebaudir*, to rejoice. The name of the family of the *Baux*, or the *joyous ones*, which Languedocian tradition traces back to the sixth century, would give a sufficiently respectable age to the Celtic word *baux* or *baud*. This word had changed significance without changing form, in passing from the English language, where *baud* (*bawd*) is synonymous with *lenon*. The word *baldo*, in Italian, has not been so much altered, for this word, derived from *baux*, is taken to mean *bold* or *impudent*. *Rebaldus* is the Latin translation of *rebaux*, composed of the emphatic preposition *re* and the original word *baux*, *baud*, or *bauld*.\* *Ribaud* and *ribaldus* are Latinized and Gallicized at the same time. These words were employed in good part before the reign of Philip Augustus, when they fell into contempt. All the languages at once adopted the degraded derivatives of *ribaix* and its compounds. *Ribaudie* in French became synonymous with *prostitution*, as did *ribaldaglia*, which Matteo Villani employs in this sense. (*Chron.* Book IV, Chapter 91). *Ribaud* then gave rise to *ribaude*, *ribalda*, which never possessed an honorable signification. According to the code of Bergerac, this was a frightful insult when addressed to a person of birth or noble condition; but it was a little thing if this insult was addressed to a woman of low degree, accompanied by no more material injuries. This singular passage from the *Coutume de Bergerac* is reported by the Benedictines, who were the continuators of Ducange. *Ribaude*, which gave rise very naturally to *ribaudaille* and *ribauderie*, continued to designate energetically every woman whose manners were disorderly or depraved.

The word *meschine*, which was habitually applied to *femmes folles de leur corps* (*women foolish with their bodies*) possessed ordinarily a character friendly rather than injurious; *meschine* did not come into

\*Translator's Note:—J. U. N.: "*Bawd*, *bold* and *bald* (It. *baldo*) are perhaps from a root more ancient than the Gothic *balths* or Armor. *maol*, meaning something akin to *naked*. To be *bald*, to be devoid of hair covering; to be *bold*, to disdain cover; to be a *bawd*, to disdain cover of modesty".

use until after *meschin*. This word, essentially Gallic or Frankish, which our language still preserves in the word *mesquin*, the sense of which is not far from its root, implied first of all a *little* (masculine) *slave*, a *young servant*. *Meschinus* and *mischinus* are to be found from the tenth century in the monastic cartularies, as Ducange proves to us on a number of occasions; this signifies *young serfs* and, by extension, *valets*. It is this latter sense which the word *meschin* affects more particularly in the language of the twelfth century; but then it is only taken in good part and is equivalent to *young lad*, *youth*. It recurs frequently in the romance of Garin, and always honorably, as in this verse.

*Vous estes jones jovenciaux et meschins.*

The feminine *meschine*, *meschina*, did not possess at first a less honorable sense; as witness this verse from the same source:

*Au matin lievent meschines et pucelles.*

But already, about the thirteenth century, the *meschines* had been shorn of their good renown, for Guillaume Guiart, in his *Branche des Royaux Lignages*, portrays them under colors none too flattering: following are four verses which make of them veritable lost women, since they are the companions of the *Cottreaux* (in 1183):

*Des sains corporaux des yglises  
Fesoient volez et chemises  
Communement a leurs meschines,  
En depit des oeuvres divines.\**

From then on, *meschine*, in common language as in poetry, designated nothing more than a servant girl. Ducange cites an old poet, after a manuscript in the library of Coislin, to prove that *dame* (*lady*) and *meschine* were opposed to each other; this same poet in another place, defines thus the rôle of the *meschine*:

*En la chambre ot une mechine  
Qui moult est de gentille orine.*

\**Translator's Note*:—"Of the holy altar cloths in the churches they are in the habit of sacrilegiously making shifts for their wenches (*meschines*)."

In an ordinance relating to the Abbot of Bonnes-Esperance, this Abbot is assigned the sum of 20 pounds (for his housekeeper, a servant and a *meschine*). The word *meschine* lent itself simultaneously to two different acceptations: sometimes it is a simple servant, fulfilling her duties, and as Louis XI says in his *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*: "She is a *meschine*, attending to the common work of the household, as the beds, the bread, and other such affairs;" sometimes it is a debauched woman, who puts herself at the service of the first comer and who sells herself by retail. It is to be understood that *meschinage* which was at first synonymous with *service*, came gradually to specify the most indecent sort of service. The *meschinage* of the taverns and the gaming-houses was held to be infamous, in the *Établissements* of St. Louis, as in the Roman law; nevertheless, St. Louis would have it that "the foolish girl who has gone into *meschinage* or into any other bad place to hire herself out" should be admitted by law, the same as her brothers and sisters, to a share in the paternal succession. (Book I, Chapter 138.)

Let us complete this Franco-Latin nomenclature of Prostitution in the Middle Ages by examining a very much used term which passed for Italian and which had been imported into France by the troubadours after the eleventh century. The consonants of the word *ruffian* indicate at first glance a midland and non-barbarous origin. *Ménage* derives it from the name of a famous Italian lenon who was called *Rufo*, without perceiving the fact that this *Rufo* assuredly came long after the word ascribed to him. Other etymologists, not content with this problematic *Rufo*, have found in Terence a *Rufus* who practiced the same trade. They have even, by an abuse of erudition, connected this word with *fornicator*, by deriving it from the German *ruef*, which signifies *vault* or *arch*, and which would be thus a translation of *fornix*. But Ducange is much nearer the truth when he draws attention to the fact that the Roman prostitutes, wearing blonde or red perukes, were called *ruffae*, according to the observations of Francois Pithou and Woverenus on Petronius. We shall complete the judicious remark of Ducange by saying that, undoubtedly, the word *ruffianus* was formed, in the low centuries, from *rufi* and from *anus*, two words joined without any ellipsis, or from *rufis* and *anús*, two other words coupled by the aid of an ellipsis. As to seeking an analogy between *ruffian* and *fien*, *foenum* or *finum*, a sty, we must not forget in such a case that one is not to submit the syllable *ruf*

to the etymologic interpretation invented by some dreamer or other who would see in *ruffian* a valet of the stable, *quod eruit fimum*.

The copulation of *rifi* and *anus* or, if you will, of *rufia* and *anûs*, is more in accord with the true sense of the word *ruffian*, *ruffianus*, which is not only a lenon, a procurer, but also rather a debauchee, the habitu   of a bad house, a keeper of girls. We are not possessed, like M  nage and, above all, Le Duchat, of an etymologic effrontery or candor; we shall not endeavor to demonstrate why, since *rufia* signified a tanned hide, and *anus* an old woman, since *anus* also signified the rectum and *rufus* a *roux*, an effeminate, these two words should lead directly to the profession of *ruffian*, a profession which was extended to the *ruffiane*. However this may be, the vocables, *ruffianus* and *ruffiana* only figure in the Middle Ages in the Italian writers who everywhere introduce us into the company of ruffians and prostitutes (*ruffiani* and *meretrices*). Ducange and Carpentier cite a number of interesting passages from these writers; in one of these passages it is stated positively that *ruffian* is synonymous with *lenon* (*quilibet et quaelibet leno, qui et quae vulgariter ruffiani dicuntur*). *Ruffian* does not seem to have been introduced into France before the thirteenth century, and it was not greatly in vogue until the fifteenth century, when *italianisme* broke out in the Gallic idiom. This word, which was employed with various nuances, never invaded the language of the oratory, but remained unredeemed in its abjectness.

Finally we shall mention still another word, which we have forgotten to speak of in its proper place, and which bears witness to the mysterious habits of Prostitution. The places of debauchery, the *bordels* were figuratively called *clapiers* (*hutches*), *claperii*, for the reason that the prostitutes hid themselves away in them like rabbits, *cuniculi* (in old French *conins*) in their holes. *Clapier*, according to M  nage, came from *lepus*, transformed into *lapus* and *lapinus*, which was pronounced *clapinus*; hence, *lapiarum* and *clapiarium*. According to Ducange, the snare for catching rabbits was called *clapa*, and since it was placed at the entrance of their holes, the latter came to usurp the name, which represented, by onomatopoeia, the sound or *clapement* of the trap at the moment the rabbit was taken. According to other scholars, *clapier* is derived from the Greek *kleptein*, which signifies *to hide*, from the Latin *lapis*, for the reason that the rabbit's holes were frequently but piles of stone or rocky earth, etc. Etymol-



ogy means little; we shall indicate, with much reserve, the obscene similarity which French humor has discovered between the words *cunnus* and *cunniculus* or *cuniculus*, of which Martial did not suspect the indecent equivocation. It is certain that our bantering ancestors found a lubricious image in this comparison of a den of prostitutes to a rabbit hutch.\*

\**Translator's Note*.—Mr. Nicolson contributes the following: "It is possible that originally a play was intended on the O. Fr. *clapoir*, Dan. *klapoor*, Icl. *klappa*, each of which is equivalent to our clap (*gonorrhœa*), noun and v. i. (See Wiseman.) But we should not overlook the O. H. G. *klump*, a crowd or mass, and A. S. *cleofan*, to split, to divide (hence to share, as expense), whence our word club (association or society). Mention should also be made of O. G. *klaffen*, to prate, and Wel. *clepiaw*, to babble; whence our obsolete verb clepe, to call or name, the sense being then a bedlam (warren or hutch full of) of gossip, scandal, ribaldry, etc. As to the obscenity which French gaiety has discovered between the words *cunnus* and *cunniculus* or *cuniculus*, the same equivoque is possible in English, remembering the old word conny (canny) to know; cony (pl. conies), a rabbit; and the common term for the vagina of the female."

## CHAPTER XLV

IN THE collection of ordinances of the kings of France of the third race, there is none to be found prior to St. Louis, relative to Prostitution; but we are not to believe, from this lacuna, that Prostitution had nearly disappeared in France, or that the legal authority had left her the absolute mistress of her acts, without surrounding her with a surveillance at once preventive and repressive. We believe, on the contrary, that disorderly manners had increased as a result of the feudal wars which had desolated the country and halted the march of civilization; we believe also that the ancient legislation regarding prostitutes had not ceased to be effective; but amid the constant social agitation there had undoubtedly been a great relaxation in the police laws, and the authorities had been rather concerned with assuring the protection of cities exposed to continual sieges and to all the consequences of an armed invasion. A sort of indulgent tolerance had, then, permitted Prostitution to gain ground in the cities, and especially in Paris, where it had been organized like the other branches of the State, with regulatory statutes, whether for the reason that the municipal administration approved this sort of thing, or whether it merely blinked its eyes at the organized existence of Prostitution. We shall not find it difficult to prove that, under the kings prior to Louis IX public manners had been more depraved than in the ninth century, and that this corruption was of a character more odious than ever; we shall find, moreover, more than one contemporary witness who will testify as to how regular Prostitution had multiplied and become acclimated, so to speak, among the Parisian population.

Prostitution, it must be admitted, had a good effect upon public morals as a whole; for since the men of the North had mingled, by good will or by force, with the indigenous Franks and Romanized Gauls, vice against nature, like a devouring contagion, had penetrated all classes of the nation and left its debauched imprint upon the religious orders, as it had upon the princely and royal families. Guillaume de Nangis, in relating, in his *Chronicle*, the tragic death of the two sons and one daughter of Henry I, king of England, who were engulfed in the sea with a throng of English lords who had em-

barked upon the same ship, pictures this shipwreck as a punishment from Heaven, and does not hesitate to say that the victims were for the most part sodomites (*omnes fere sodomitica lade dicebantur et erant irretiti*). This horrible moral degradation, as we have shown above, was to be met with everywhere, especially among the monks; and the Church afflicted with these excesses, which she was forced to hide in her bosom, could not refrain from branding with an anathema, these unworthy members. We shall see later that the condemnation of the Templars on the part of Boniface VIII and Philip the Handsome, was but a terrible measure of justice against sodomy disguised in the habits of the Temple. Sodomy was also the secret bond of different heretical sects, which sought to gain a foothold and propagate by means of such indecencies. These schismatics quailed before the firm and rigid attitude of the higher clergy, who were supported by the temporal power with its executions and punishments. This abominable vice had become so inveterate among the people that the Manicheans, who continued under various names down to the fourteenth century, owed to it their monetary success and, at the same time, the relentless repression to which they were subjected. In view of the frightful progress of such a plague, we can understand how Prostitution might naturally be looked upon as a remedy for the evil, or at least as a wholesome dike. Jacques de Vitry, in his *Histoire Occidentale* (Chapter VII), has reported this curious and significant fact, that the public women, who were in the habit of brazenly stopping the ecclesiastics in the street, would address them as *sodomites*, when the latter refused to follow these dangerous sirens. "This shameful and detestable vice," he adds, "is so widespread in this city; this poison, this pestilence, is so incurable that he who keeps one or more concubines is looked upon as a man of exemplary manners."

Jacques de Vitry, who furnishes us this precious observation on the subject of morals in Paris at the end of the twelfth century, appears to have been especially interested in providing a picture of Prostitution, which had taken possession of the University quarter, and which reigned supreme there. "In the same house," he says, "one finds schools below and places of debauchery up above; on the first floor, the professors give their lessons; up above, debauched women practice their shameful trade and while they are quarreling among themselves or with their lovers, the learned instructors are

holding disputations with their scholars." The quarter of the colleges and the schools was occupied at this period solely by masters of arts and students; these latter, aged, the most of them, from twenty to twenty-five years, and belonging to all nations, formed a sort of undisciplined army of 150,000 individuals, who mocked the sergeants of the watch\* and who refused to permit the provost of Paris to mingle in their affairs; they protected thus the *femmes de vie* installed in their quarter, covering them with a veil of impunity so long as they did not cross the boundaries of this *lieu de franchise*. The rector and the *suppôts* of the University, knowing that youth has need of spending its ardent exuberance and its strength to the profit of the passions, did not meddle with these pleasures nor demand that the scholars live the lives of anchorites. Thus may be explained that interior which Jacques de Vitry has drawn from nature, and which gives us a faithful picture of the state of Prostitution in the neighborhood of the *Écoles* of the Rue du Fouarre. It is probable, nevertheless, that this domiciliary Prostitution was not the only one which found a safeguard with the *Écoliers*; vagabond Prostitution, which corresponds to the ideas and the instincts of the time, must have found free reign in the Pré-aux-Clercs, that rustic promenade of the *enfants prodigues* of the University, that vast plain, traversed by pretty rivulets bordered with willow groves, shaded by massive trees and cut by flowering hedges. This was certainly the rendezvous of the *filles de champs* and *de haies*,\*\* who had nothing to fear in this free asylum from the austere pursuits of the abbatial justice of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. The University saw to it that its privileges were respected, with regard even to the companions of its debaucheries.

The Pré-aux-Clercs was not the only refuge of vagabond Prostitution; the latter had also a retreat not less inviolable and one more convenient in the cold or rainy season. The *palais des thermes de Julien*, in which the kings of the first race had sojourned, had not been inhabited for a number of centuries, and the ruins of this vast Gallo-Roman habitation, surrounded with vineyards and gardens, afforded, according to the expression of a contemporary poet, "an infinity of sinuous retreats, always favorable to secret acts, and mysterious hiding places, the accomplices of crime, since they spare

\*Translator's Note:—For the attitude of the students to the Parisian authorities, see *A Travers le Quartier Latin*, par Octave Charpentier, A. Plicque et cie, Paris, 1925.

\*\*Translator's Note:—"Lasses of the fields" and "of the hedges".



the shame of those who commit crime." Jean de Hauteville, who makes us acquainted with the obscene use of the ancient palace under the reigns of Louis VII and Philip-Augustus, tells us what he had seen with his own eyes, in his misanthropic poem entitled *Archithrenius*: "It is there," he says, with less of indignation than of pity, "it is there that the thickness of the trees, usurping the function of the night, is an incessant protection to furtive love and frequently hides from severe glances the last symptoms of expiring modesty; for the one who desires to commit a bad action seeks the shadows, and her shame, which feels more at ease in dark places, loves to wrap itself in the veils of the night." Philip-Augustus, in 1218, made a donation of these Roman ruins to his chamberlain, Henri, concierge of the Palais de la Cité, probably with the duty of enclosing them with walls and expelling Prostitution. Such was also Philip-Augustus' intention, when he caused the cemetery of the Holy Innocents to be surrounded with a well-built wall, for it was here that nocturnal Prostitution held forth without respect to the dead who were its mute witnesses. Guillaume le Breton, in speaking of this cemetery in his epic poem, the *Philippide*, waxes indignant at this insolent profanation: *Et quod pejus erat, meretricabatur in illo* (Book I, verse 441).

It was the same in all the places neighboring this enclosure; Prostitution came there to pitch its camp at the fall of day, and the vile creatures who made use of it would wait there for their prey along the most frequented paths. We read, in the *Grandes Chroniques de Saint-Denis*, this detail which takes us back to the reign of Philip-Augustus: "And also those foolish women who go to the *bordeaux* and to the corners of streets there to abandon themselves, for a small price, to all, without fear or shame." This is the only passage in a writer of the thirteenth century in which there is question of the wages of debauchery; and although the price of the favors of a street-corner prostitute was not a fixed one, we cannot doubt that it was very low, undoubtedly on account of the excessive competition. Prostitution had still another *champ de foire* beyond the city, on the road to Vincennes, in a place sown with thickets and groves, beyond the Porte Saint-Antoine. Dubruel reports in his *Antiquités de Paris*, that this place was the ordinary scene of those attacks which the *écoliers* committed with impunity upon the wives, daughters and chambermaids of the Parisian bourgeoisie. They erected at first a stone cross, called the *Croix Benoiste*, in the center of this ill-famed wood; but

the setting up of this cross served but to attract a greater number of *hommes et femmes de dissolution* who gave themselves, under pretext of devotion and pilgrimage,\* to the most criminal promiscuity. A certain preacher, famous for his conversions, Foulques de Neuilly, Abbot of Saint-Denis, appeared suddenly amid this band of libertines and prostitutes; standing on the base of the Croix Benoiste, he summoned them to renounce their damnable habits and to do penance by consecrating themselves to God. The women who heard him, and who belonged to the dregs of the people, felt themselves moved to repentance and foreswore their infamous trade by cutting off their hair and becoming the first religious of the Abbey of Saint-Antoine-des-Champs, which recruited its community from all stages of Prostitution. The poor wretches whom the Croix Benoiste had viewed abandoning themselves *for a small and villainous price*, now made processions about this cross, with naked feet and *en chemise*; some afterwards married honorably; others vowed themselves to the contemplative life; but in the beginning, about the year 1190, this strange convent assembled under the same roof as many men as women, and we may suppose that, despite the eloquent preachings of Foulques de Neuilly and his successor, Pierre de Roissy, this mixture of the two sexes was not calculated to inspire virtue in the former prostitutes and converted debauchees. It was the illustrious Bishop of Paris, Maurice de Sully, who, in the year 1196, removed the men and put the women under the rule of Cîteaux, threatening to expel them all if they did not mend their ways.

Besides these miserable vabagonds who exploited the environs of the city, and who fell by night like birds of prey upon belated travelers, there were, in certain quarters and in certain streets, *bordeaux* and *clapiers*, which received numerous visitors before the hour of

\**Translator's Note*:—These "pilgrimages" *extra muros* appear to have been popular in Italy as in France, during the Middle Ages. See Aretino's *La Cortigiana*, Act IV, dialogue between Arcolano, Togna and Alvia (Putnam translation). Alvia the procuress, is gossiping with Togna, the baker's wife, when the baker, Arcolano, comes in. Alvia endeavors to throw him off the track:

Alv. There's no other feast day that I know of this week, daughter, except the pilgrimage to San Lorenzo *extra*. . .

(*Enter Arcolano.*)

Arc. What are you two gossiping about?

Alv. *Debita nostra debitoribus*. Monna Antonia was just asking me about the pilgrimage to San Lorenzo *extra muros*. *Sic nos dimittimus*.

Arc. I don't like these carryings-on.

curfew, and which paid to the treasury an impost which was an imitation of the Roman *vectigal*. Proofs of these facts are lacking at this period, but we are to meet them later in abundance. Tradition is never to be disdained, especially when it concerns contemporary circumstances, and such a tradition, preserved by Sauval in the seventeenth century (*Recherch. et Antiq. de Paris*, Vol. II, page 638), informs us that, well prior to Louis IX, "the scandalous women had statutes, certain habits which made them recognizable, and even their own judges." This tradition was perpetuated among the women of an evil way of life, who still pretended, in Sauval's time, "that the Magdalen's Day had been a festival, with their predecessors from the time they made up a body politic and had their own streets and their own costumes, and even before Saint Louis had obliged them to wear certain habits in order to distinguish them from decent women." Unfortunately, the details which Sauval furnishes us on this singular subject, are not to be found in his printed work, from which they have been expurgated, along with the celebrated treatise on the *Bordels de Paris*, out of modesty on the part of the publishers; but it is impossible not to suppose that Sauval had sufficient ocular proof of the existence of these statutes of Prostitution, which must have had the force of law prior to the *Livre des Métiers* of Etienne Boileau. This *Prud'homme* was ashamed to include in his compilation of the privileges and customs of the various arts and trades, a work in which he professes so much hatred for Prostitution, a special chapter devoted to the regulation of a public scandal which it was his object to do away with, by giving it no place in municipal jurisprudence. These statutes, relating to *Putage*, which are to be discovered here and there in the history of manners, were inevitably established and maintained by force of custom, but were not, perhaps, approved and confirmed by the kings. We are authorized to think that if, in a time when the *Métiers* and the *Marchandises* had their special code, tolerated Prostitution did not possess its own, the Bordelières would not have formed a separate corporation as they did under the jurisdiction of the *Roi des Ribauds* (literally, *King of Bauds*; Master of the Revels). The title of *Roi* (king), attributed to the head or principal master of a corporation, was always inseparable from the statutes of that corporation; *la ribaudie* had its *roi des ribauds*, while *la Mercerie* had its *roi des merciers* (king of haberdashers) and *la mene-strandie* (minstrelsy) its *roi des ménétriers* (king of fiddlers).

We shall see later that nothing is lacking except statutes to prove that the public women of Paris had very anciently constituted a trade-body. Undoubtedly we are not at liberty to supplement the loss of these statutes so far as the reception of the prostitutes in the community, their degrees of apprenticeship, the public tax, the revenues paid into the treasury, alms and fines are concerned—in a word, all the interior organization of the *métier*; but we do possess precise information regarding the quarters and streets assigned to debauchery, on which the women devoted to this shameful industry had left their distinctive mark, and with regard to the hours of labor and other regulations by which these women were governed. One anecdote relating to Prostitution impresses us as being very important from this point of view, all the more so for the reason that it has not yet been understood by those who have drawn on the *Chronicle* of Geoffroy, Prior of Vigéois (*Nova bibloth, manusc. of P. Labbé. vol.I, page 309*); “Queen Marguerite, being in church while the kiss of peace was being exchanged by the assistants, seeing a woman adorned with magnificent garments and taking her for a bride, gave her the kiss of peace. This woman was a ribaude who followed the court (*meretricem regiam*). The Princess, instructed as to her mistake, complained to the King, who thereupon directed that public women should wear in Paris (*Parisiis*) the *surcot* or cape (*chlamyde seu cappâ uti*), so that they might be distinguished thus from those who had been legitimately married.” This curious anecdote, which figures in a *Chronicle* dating from the year 1184, can in no fashion be assigned to the reign of Saint Louis and Queen Marguerite, wife of this King, since the author of the *Chronicle* died more than sixty years before the marriage of Saint Louis with Marguerite of Provence. This incident, which the Prior of Vigéois had heard related in the depths of his Limousin monastery, bears an incontestable date, that of 1172, since the Princess Marguerite, daughter of Louis VII and Queen Constance, had been affianced to Henri au Courtmantel, son of the King of England, and had been crowned queen by the Archbishop of Rouen. We may, nevertheless, leave to this incident the date of 1158, which the chronicler assigns it, by supposing that, in his *Chronicle*, written after 1172, he has described as *Queen* Marguerite the Princess who had not yet been crowned and who was not more than six years of age at the time her childish innocence was defiled by the kiss of a prostitute.



It is extraordinary that the fact in question should not have been related elsewhere than in the *Chronicle* of the Prior of Vigemois, whom many historians have confounded with Geoffroi of Beaulieu, thus dating from the reign of Louis IX a detail which assuredly belongs to the reign of Louis VII, and which proves that this king had drawn up against women of an evil life an ordinance which has not come down to us. We may draw from this fact more than one interesting deduction. In the first place, this prostitute, whom the chronicler calls *royal*, was she one of those *following the court* whom we shall meet with, under the same description, down to the reign of Francis I, or was she merely one of the ordinary subjects of the Master of the Revels, one of the women of his royal corporation? Moreover, it is certain that Louis VII, by subjecting the trade of public women to certain costumes, thereby implicitly recognized the legal existence of these women and authorized them to practice their culpable commerce within the confines of Paris (*Parisiis*). Finally, as to the surname of the husband of the Princess Marguerite, Henri au Courtmantel, may it not have some indirect analogy with the adventure of his wife, and who was the cause of the *filles d'amour* not being able to wear any more the cape or long cloak. It is interesting to remark, in any case, that, from this period, the prostitutes of Paris making up the corporation *des ribaudes* dressed themselves *de court*, like the *meretrices* of Rome, clad in the toga and not in the stole.

The corporation of *filles amoureuses* was, then, in the time of Louis VII, evidently in a state of prosperity, which is sufficiently manifested by the luxury of its *liveries* or trade costumes. Sauval, in another passage of his valuable compilation (vol. II, page 450), states positively that this indecent corporation had recourse for its secret government to the States of Orleans, in 1560. In default of these statutes, we have not even discovered proofs of the sorority of the Magdalen, which Sauval assures us existed, without saying to what parish it was attached or what were its privileges, its indulgences, and its festivals. It is, thus, merely by conjecture, although one sufficiently plausible, that we shall assign as the principal seat of this indecent sorority a small church of the Magdalen, which existed with this designation in the eleventh century, and which later took the name of Saint-Nicolas. The space occupied by this old church, which disappeared in the revolution of '89, is now filled with private houses. We shall not dare to uphold the thesis that this was the

scene of that kiss of peace given by a princess to a courtesan. The curate of this parish bore the title of arch-priest, and despite the small importance of the parish and the church, he could not but be proud of his title on account of the sorority of Notre-Dame-aux-Bourgeois, which appears to have succeeded that of the Magdalen, when St. Louis essayed the radical suppression of Prostitution. It is to this circumstance that we shall assign the change of name of the church, which, although always dedicated to the Magdalen, appears to have endeavored to purify itself by changing its name to Saint-Nicolas. However, the image of the Magdalen still figured on the great altar, and her relics were still exposed in a shrine of gilded silver. Almost all the historians of Paris, including Dubruel, who have spoken of this ancient church of the Cité, would have it that Saint-Nicolas was its primitive patron; Dubruel and Sauval place in one of its chapels, enriched at the expense of a confiscated Jewry after the expulsion of the Jews under Philip-Augustus, the confraternity of the *Poissonniers* and the *Bateliers*,\* who undoubtedly did not resent the proximity of the sorority *des ribaudes*. This church was the only one which possessed relics of the Saint that were venerated, and we are not to believe, as an obscure passage of Dubruel would give us to understand, that these relics had not been deposited there until 1491, by Louis de Beaumont, Bishop of Paris. This bishop merely changed the reliquary. This consisted not merely of locks of hair (*de capillis*) of the Magdalen, but also of a portion of the skin of her head, detached from the place where our Lord had laid His hand.

All the dissolute women agreed in honoring the Magdalen as their patron, without worrying about making a choice among the different saints whom legend offered them under this name. It appears that they also paid a cult to St. Mary the Egyptian, who had been, before her conversion, a celebrated prostitute. A tradition that is almost contemporary permits us to verify the fact that the chapel dedicated to this Saint, in the street which had become the Rue de la Jussienne, in place of *de l'Egyptienne* or *de la Gyppecienne*, was the parish affected by public women from the twelfth century; they frequented this chapel, they went there to have masses said, they burned candles there and brought there their offerings, the tithes of their shameful trade; they came there on pilgrimages from all points of the city,

\*Translator's Note:—Fishmongers and bargemen.

and nothing was stranger that their ex-voto offerings and their artificial bouquets suspended about the image of their patron. In 1660, the curate of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, whose dependency this chapel was, caused to be erected in it a stained glass window which was to be seen for more than three centuries, and which became an object of scandal to pious persons. This window represented a saint upon a boat, raising up her robe and preparing to pay her passage to the boatman, with this inscription, which has undoubtedly been revised: "How the Saint offered her body to the boatman for her passage." We see from this anecdote why it was the boatmen of the Seine had adopted the same patron as the prostitutes. It is probable that the sorority of the *ribaudes* was transferred from the church of the Magdalen to a chapel of St. Mary the Egyptian, when the great sorority of the Virgin Mary, *Notre Dame aux seigneurs, prêtres, bourgeois et bourgeoises de la ville de Paris* was established in 1168 in this church, perhaps on the occasion when a "daughter of joy" had outraged the forehead of a Daughter of France by giving her the kiss of peace or by receiving it from her. The king and the queen were, from its foundation, members of this confraternity of Notre-Dame, which we are surprised to see placed under the auspices of the Magdalen. As to the chapel of St. Mary the Egyptian, it was erected beyond the walls, in the environs of the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents, which was at that time one of the most ill-famed centers of vagabond Prostitution.

When Louis IX mounted the throne, his first thought was not absolutely to proscribe in his realm legal Prostitution, which had been tolerated if not permitted; but he did endeavor to combat it and diminish it, with the arms of religion and the resources of charity. "Never," says Sauval, "have there been in the kingdom so many women of an evil life as at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and never, on the other hand, have they been punished with more rigor." Guillaume de Seligny, Bishop of Paris, convoked the prostitutes of the city and endeavored to make them blush for their ignoble trade; some renounced their calling to embrace a decent life and marry; others asked for the cloister to expiate their sins. Guillaume then went to find the young King who had just succeeded his father, Louis VIII, and whose soul was filled with the pious instructions of his mother, the virtuous Queen Blanche. This Prince marveled at the beautiful conversions which the Bishop had made, and in order

not to lose the fruit of these conversions, set about founding a house of refuge, destined for female sinners whom Grace had touched. He was about to open this house in a close situated in the Rue Saint-Jacques and belonging to his confessor and chaplain, Robert Sorbon, whom he desired to place at the head of this community of penance; but he revised his plan upon reflecting that the Schools of the Rue du Fouarre provided threatening neighbors for the new converts. He placed the latter, therefore, at a distance from the *écoliers*, out in the country on the other side of the city, and he deeded them a vast tract of land, where he caused to be erected for them a church, cloisters, dormitories and various buildings enclosed with substantial walls. This monastery, which later became a hopsital, occupied all the space where the *quartier du Caire* has been constructed since the revolution. There were gardens and vineyards in this species of fortress, which was called, says Joinville, the *maison des Chartriers*. We do not know where it got its name of *maison des filles-dies* which remained with it; we must believe that it was a piece of popular malice which thus christened those religious whom the devil had subjected to a none too edifying apprenticeship. However this may be, this name of *Filles Dies*, which had been at first but an epigram, came to be taken seriously, even by those who bore it.

A satiric poet of this time, Rutebeuf, mocks these *Filles Dies* and their name as not being appropriate to their antecedents; but one might deduce from these verses of Rutebeuf that the penitents of Guillaume de Seligny had been at first called *Femmes-Dieu*:

*Diex a mon de filles avoir  
Mès je ne poy oncques savoir  
Que Diex eust fame en sa viel\**

Rutebeuf understands by the term *lignage de Marie* supplying *Madeleine* all the personnel of Prostitution, among whom Saint Louis had found his *Filles Dies*; "And he caused," related Joinville, "a great multitude of women to be placed in a hostelry, who out of poverty had fallen into the sin of lust, and he gave them four hundred pounds rent to keep them." This donation of four hundred pounds in rent was considerable, by reason of the enormous value of silver, and all

\**Translator's Note*:—"God may have daughters (*filles*), but I did not know that God ever had a wife (woman—*fame*)."



the world was astonished that the Daughters of God should have been better treated than the *Quinze-Vingts* who had but three hundred pounds in revenue. The *Filles Dies* were but two hundred in the beginning, but they received constantly into their hospitable house those lost women whom penance had snatched from debauchery. This monastery had for *maître proviseur et gouverneur* a priest whom the Bishop of Paris called his *well beloved in Jesus Christ*, and whom the religious named *father in God*. This was not the only foundation of the same sort which the holy King encouraged with his counsels and his deniers; "And he set up," reports Joinville, "in a number of places in his kingdom houses of pious persons, and he gave them rents that they might live, and commanded that they should receive those who desired to live chastely."

Louis IX did his best to stem thus the torrent of Prostitution, but he did not succeed in reforming manners, which the Crusades had rendered still more perverse;\* for the crusaders imitated the Musulmans, and set up veritable harems filled with slave girls purchased in the bazaars of Asia. "The common people were taken with foolish women," says Joinville, "revealing thus the principal cause of the disasters which followed that Crusade in which the King had been made a prisoner by the infidels. This wise Prince knew to what it was he had to attribute his disasters; and so, upon recovering his liberty, he dismissed a number of officers of his house because he had been advised that these libertines had set up their brothel (*tenoient leur bordiau*) on a jutting rock near his tent. Vainly he endeavored to banish from his camp debauchery and lechery; his severest orders merely revealed the impotence of his chaste efforts against these outbursts of lust. While he was at Caesarea, he judged according to the laws of the country a knight who had been taken in a brothel (*au bordel*). The guilty one had to choose between two equally dishonorable courses: the *ribaude* with whom he had been taken in the act had to lead him *en chemise*, with a cord bound to his *genetaires* (genital parts) through the camps; otherwise, he was to abandon his horse and his armour to the good pleasure of the King and be

\**Translator's Note*:—The Crusades had a very direct and definite influence upon prostitution. War and an imposed unnatural separation of the sexes always tend to have this effect. If we are to believe the contemporary chroniclers, each Crusaders' camp had its populous brothel. Geoffrey, monk of Vigeois, estimates that there were 1,500 concubines following the royal army in 1180, and a similar account is given by Comines of the camp of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1475.

expelled from the army. The knight preferred the latter punishment and left. Louis IX, although he did his best to inspire in his servants a noble passion for beauty, had to groan at witnessing the progress of social demoralization. Finally, after his return from Palestine, as though to pay a solemn tribute to the memory of his pious mother for whom he still wept, he endeavored to destroy Prostitution by prohibiting it, without exception, throughout his realm, in the provinces of the north as well as in those of the midland (*Languedoc* and *Languedoil*).

It was in an ordinance of the month of December, 1254, that he introduced this memorable article, which, tucked away among many others less important, decreed in a definitive manner the suppression of houses of debauchery and the banishment of women of evil life; "Item, common *ribaudes* shall be banished as well from the fields as from the cities; and when they have been properly warned, their goods shall be seized by the judges of the place or by their authority, and they shall be despoiled of all they possess; and whoever shall rent a house to a *ribaude* or who shall receive a *ribaude* in his house, he shall be held to pay to the bailiff of the place, or to the provost, or to the judge as much as the *pension* (rent) amounts to in a year." But St. Louis was not slow in perceiving that Prostitution was a necessary plague, in halting greater evils in the social order.

## CHAPTER XLVI

IT IS here that we have to introduce a singular personage with whom history does not make us acquainted, at least under his characteristic name, until the reign of Philip-Augustus, but who might have been the contemporary of Charlemagne. The *roi des ribauds*, *rex ribaldorum*, king of the ribalds or ribaldries, was, evidently, in the beginning, the sovereign judge of Prostitution at the court of the kings of France. A large number of scholars, from Jean Boutillier to Gouye de Laonguemare, have engaged in learned researches and given vent to ingenious dissertations with the object of determining the prerogatives, rank and duties of this weird officer of the royal household; they have cited the texts of ordinances, exhumed new facts, drawn upon the *Trésor des Chartes*, and sought the truth amidst a mass of contradictory facts; but they have not been able to agree as to the true character of the king of the ribalds, for the reason that they have systematically endeavored either to exalt or debase him in his functions, which were as complex as they were far-reaching, as bizarre as they were terrible. After so many works of erudition and criticism, before clearing up this obscure subject, we shall ourselves launch an inquiry regarding the king of the ribalds, whom we regard as the precursor of the police commissaries of today. We believe we shall be able, from this point of view, to bring to light a sufficiently impressive historical continuity, in the course of our inquiry regarding this ancient officer of the court, intimately associated with the history of Prostitution in France.

Nearly all the authors who have spoken of the king of the ribalds, and who have endeavored to define his attributes, have been more or less deceived in their conclusions for the reason that they have considered but one of the numerous phases of this personage and office. Thus, Jean Boutillier, who wrote his *Somme Rurale* about the year 1460, represents the king of the ribalds as *executor of the sentences and commands of the marshals and the provosts* in the royal suite; Jean le Ferron makes of him the first sergeant of the *maîtres d'hôtel du roi*; Carondes makes him the *sergent* or the *commissaire du prévôt de l'hôtel*; Claude Fauchet makes him the *concierger* of the royal palace; Belleforest makes him *provost of the king's house*; Ragu-

eau calls him the *grand maître des filles publiques*; Étienne Pasquier refers to him as a *bailiff* or *sénéchal* of the ribauds. Each of them gives to the king of the ribalds a particular character, a power more or less restrained, and a dignity more or less considerable, without taking account of the successive changes wrought by time in an institution which comprised many very diverse duties. The assembling in chronological order, all the views of historians and juriconsults regarding the mysterious duties of the king of the ribalds would seem to show that not one among them has explained the part which this officer of the palace played at the time his office was created, or, how his office progressively declined in importance as other posts came to be established in the king's household at the expense of his own rights and privileges. The king of the ribalds ceased to exist when his office came to be looked upon as a shameful one, when ancient authority had passed into many hands, and when his competitors bearing honorable names began sharing, during his lifetime, the duties which had been assigned to him; his post had fallen into discredit rather than into desuetude. This last king of the ribalds in the court of France, after having seen the finest flowers in his crown disputed and snatched away by the provosts of the royal household, the concierge of the palace, the provosts of marshals and other officers more recent than himself, had the chagrin of witnessing, upon the accession of Francis I, the rest of his old supremacy disappear, that supremacy which he had exercised over Prostitution *suivant la cour*; he saw this supremacy pass into the hands of a *dame des filles de joie*, and it was thus that his sceptre was forced to yield to the distaff.

We have remarked, in citing a capitulary of Charlemagne on the interior policing of the royal domains, that the officers of the palace (*ministeriales palatini*), assigned to the surveillance and guarding of these domains, possessed many points of analogy with the king of the ribalds whom we find four centuries later exercising the same surveillance in the king's household. In short, these *ministeriales palatini*, among whom the great officers of the crown originated, were required to see to the expulsion from the royal residences of every suspected individual, man or woman, who might have entered there. It was especially vagabonds (*gadales*) and prostitutes (*meretrices*) who had to fear the jurisdiction of the *ministerial polican*, who judged sovereignly all cases of this nature and caused the de-



linquents to be beaten with rods. We have here the first office of the king of the ribalds, and we may say, with every appearance of reason, that if he was not so called before the reign of Philip-Augustus, he nevertheless performed similar duties under Charlemagne. It is altogether natural that this office should have been first established on those vast farms (*villae*), or centers of agrarian and manufacturing exploitation, which the French kings possessed in various parts of their Empire, the revenues from which constituted the chief wealth of the royal treasury. The serfs, male and female, subjected to certain administrative police laws, were the masters neither of their bodies nor their time; care was taken to remove from them every temptation to idleness and Prostitution; their work, their health and their manners were thus protected by a paternal provision. It was, then, very important that unknown persons should not be introduced into the gynaeceums and the dormitories; the regularity of communal life would have suffered from the unwholesome contact with women of evil life, and it would have required but the presence of a leper, a debauchee, a thief or a mendicant to spread physical or moral contagion among the peaceful population of these secular retreats, where several thousands of serfs of both sexes were gathered in one place. The officer whose special duty it was to prevent intrusion in a royal villa would appear to have been the concierge; and his office, in those times, was equivalent to that of chief-butler, head-chamberlain, and grand sénéchal. It required but a change in name to produce the king of the ribalds.

The Merovingian and Carlovingian kings, accompanied by a numerous suite of officers and servants, would go from one domain to another to take up their residence, and the multitude of persons who followed them would inevitably be increased by a number of foreign women, attracted by desire for gain, which they hoped to achieve through debauchery. There was necessity, then, for a permanent and special authority to keep order in this throng and to carry out orders which demanded a prompt and irrevocable execution, whether the king was *en voyage en chevauchée* or reposing in his own domain. Hence the appointment of an officer or *ministerial* of the palace, having the right of life and death over every individual who caused trouble or disorder in the household of the king. Aimoin (Book V, Chapter 10) reports that Louis-le-Débonnaire expelled from the palace an enormous troop of women supposed to be attached to

the service of the Queen and the King's sisters (*omnem coetum femineum, qui permaximum erat, palatio excludi indicavit*), and of these, exception was made but of a small number of followers who were judged indispensable to the royal service. But undoubtedly, these women were not slow in reappearing, and the courts of kings, queens and princes became the objective of all starveling ambitions, of all interested vices, of all low beings. It may be readily conceived that the expeditive justice of the king of the ribalds was in full force before his name had come to describe his customary duties, and to indicate the sort of persons who came more directly under the jurisdiction of his tribunal, from which there was no appeal. This descriptive name does not appear before the reign of Philip-Augustus.

It was during this reign that the word *ribaldus*, or *ribaud*, the etymology of which we have elsewhere studied, made its appearance in the vulgar tongue and began to be employed from then on in an unsavory sense. It was used to designate those of one or the other sex who had no profession and who were to be found wandering and pillaging about the *ost* or *chevauchée* of the king, living by Prostitution, by theft, by gaming or by alms. This degraded horde had increased prodigiously with the Crusades, until in an army the number of stragglers and valets following the court came to exceed that of the combatants. Among these camp-followers, always ready for pillage, there were women who fed the fires of incontinence under the oriflamme of the king and under the banners of his vassals. Philip-Augustus conceived the idea of turning to his own profit a necessary evil: in the place of seeking to free himself of the plague of ribaldry (*ribaudie*) by threats and punishments, which had proved futile when attempted, he organized into a paid band these parasitic hordes who struck more fear into the enemy than the army which they followed like a cloud of devouring locusts. Historians are silent as to the manner in which he enrolled these *enfants perdus* and as to how he held them and disciplined them to military service; but it may be supposed that he left them in large part to their debauched and lecherous habits, that he winked at their detestable excesses, and that he did not restrain them from taking with them to war as many women as might be recruited along the way. However this may be, this band of ribalds, composed of the dregs of a vagabond and drafted soldiery, distinguished itself by such feats of arms, by such marvelous strokes, by so many evidences of bravery and intrep-

idity, that Philip-Augustus made of it an élite corps, specially attached to his own person. The chroniclers say the King made use of it to assure himself against the daggers of assassins, that the Old Man of the Mountain was unavailing against him, and that one enemy after another came only to perish on the naked swords of these ribald followers of the Most Christian King. These ribalds accompanied Philip-Augustus everywhere in his wars, in which they did not spare their own blood, animated as they were by an ardor for pillage. Guillaume le Breton, who is pleased to describe their prowess in his *Philippide*, paints them as unconquerable heroes who recoiled before no danger, and who do not even deign to make use of armour.

*Et ribaldorum nihilominus agmen inerme,  
Qui numquam dubitant in quaevis ire pericula.\**

Elsewhere, the poet shows them to us laden with booty:

*Nec munus armigeri, ribaldorumque manipuli,  
Ditati spoliis, et rebus, equisque subibant.\*\**

When Philip-Augustus comes to besiege Tours, after having subjugated Poitou, it is a ribald captain (*buce ribaldo*) whom he delegates to seek a ford across the Loire; the ford being miraculously (*quasi per miracula*) found by this captain, the army crosses the river and the ribalds of the king (*ribaldi regis*, says Rigord), who are accustomed to lead the van (*qui primos imbetus in expugnandis munitionibus facere consueverunt*) run to the ladders, and the city does not wait until it has been taken and sacked to open its gates to the King.

From these passages and many others of the same sort, it is certain that the ribalds of Philip-Augustus formed a very redoubtable militia, but one with little discipline and capable of all sorts of violences. The King, in recognition of their services, did not demand of them the same submission and the same disciplinary duties he did from the rest of his militia; nevertheless, since it was impossible, from the bad example it would otherwise have set, to leave all crimes un-

\*Translator's Note:—"And an unarmed train of ribalds, who do not fear to go into any danger whatsoever."

\*\*Translator's Note:—"Nor did they go laden with the soldier's or the ribald's steeds and other booty."

punished in this disorderly troop, which barely recognized the commands of its leaders, and which, when it was not engaged in battle, had no other occupation than debauchery, dice-playing, drunkenness and blasphemy—for this reason, the King confided the supreme command of these redoubtable wretches to one of the high officers of his household, to whom was given the duty of policing the interior of the royal dwelling and *ost*, and who exercised conditionally a redoubtable authority over those responsible for crimes of any sort committed within his jurisdiction. This officer of the palace was surrounded with the prestige that comes from respect and terror; for he was followed everywhere by a jailor and an executioner; with him there was never any interval between condemnation and execution; he pronounced the death penalty as readily as he did lighter ones, from which he sometimes drew a profit for himself. The office of king of the ribalds came to be a very lucrative one, on account of the criminal fines as well as the revenues which came from the gaming-houses, the taverns and the public women. He had also his share of the booty which the ribalds brought back from their expeditions, and he also claimed a certain right in the prisoners of war. We read, in the list of knights who were taken in the battle of Bouvines in 1214: *Rogerus de Wafalia. Hunc habuit Rex Ribaldorum, quia dicebat se esse servientem.* This important passage, cited by Ducange, proves that the king of the ribalds assumed the character of *sergeant-at-arms* to the king in time of war, but it does not permit us to decide whether this officer of the French crown had to take an active part in the battles or not, or whether or not he fought at the head of his band like the other captains. We might suppose this to be the case from the *Roman de la Rose*, composed in the thirteenth century by Guillaume de Lorris, who makes of the king of the ribalds a captain, when the *Dieu d'amour* assembles his army to deliver *Bel-accueil* from his prison; but the choice which he makes of *Faux-semblant*, in conducting the rabble (*ribaudaille*) to the assault, is sufficient evidence that the bad reputation of the soldiers redounded on their chief. Following are the verses of the *Roman de la Rose* in which Dieu D'Amour summons Faux-semblant, to outline the conduct which the latter is to pursue:

*Faux-semblant, par tel convenant,  
Tu seras à moy maintenant.*



*Et à nos amis aideras,  
 Et point tu ne les greveras,  
 Ains penseras les enlever  
 Et tous nos ennemis grever.  
 Tien soit le pouvoir et le baux,  
 Car le roy seras des ribaux.\**

It is clear that, in this quotation, as Pasquier observes, the king of the ribalds is represented under the figure of a captain at arms, and not as a magistrate. We have grounds, however, for supposing that he might have been one or the other, when we recall the unruly character of the ribalds of Philip-Augustus, even when they were organized as the King's bodyguard. A chief who did not possess the authority of a judge would never have been able to discipline this horde of wretches, whom fear alone kept in the path of duty. All the histories of this period are full of sinister details which acquaint us with the dangerous and difficult mission of the king of the ribalds. Listen to Guillaume de Neubrige (Book V, Chapter 2): "Certain *enfants perdus* of that species of men who are called *ribauds*." Listen to Matthew Pâris: "Thieves, banished men, fugitives and the excommunicated, whom France commonly confounds under the name of *ribauds*." But the manner of life of these ribalds is nowhere better described than in the *Chronicle* of Longpont, where the prior of the abbey demands of Jean de Montmirel what he expects to do in the world. "I purpose to be a ribald!" proudly replies the young man, who is later to become a canonized saint. "Can it be true?" cries the stupefied friar; "do you aspire than to become one of those villanous fellows who are as despicable before God as they are before men? Do you know that in order to put yourself upon a footing with such criminals, it is necessary for you to swear like them, to perjure yourself incessantly, to play at dice, to carry a sign-board (*écriteau—tabellam comportare*), to carry with you a concubine (*pellicem circumducere*) and to be constantly drunken with wine?" One can readily imagine that brawls and murders were frequent among such bandits, and that the king of the ribalds must frequently have had to intervene

\**Translator's Note*:—"Faux-Semblant, you shall remain at my side and aid our friends, and you shall not injure them, but think only of succouring them, and of doing all the injury you can to our enemies; full power is hereby given you, for you shall be the King of the Bawds."

in order to bring peace among these convicts, who were to be seen everywhere escorted by their female companions, as rapacious, as turbulent and as incorrigible as themselves. It is probable that the company composed of the king's ribalds was disbanded after the death of Philip-Augustus, possibly following some revolt; for if the ribalds still figure in all the Crusades, in all the wars and campaigns, they are no longer different from the stragglers of the army; they are badly armed, badly clad, so badly that the proverb, *naked as a ribald*, became prevalent about the year 1230, according to an ancient manuscript *Chronicle*, from which Ducange has extracted a few verses. Guillaume Guiart, who introduces the ribalds into his historical poem of the *Royaux Lignages*, depicts them under the most miserable colors, sometimes:

*Bruient soudoiers et ribaus,  
Qui de tout perdre sont si baus;\**

Sometimes:

*Ribauz, qui volentiers oidivent,  
Par coustume d'antiquité,  
Querent aux murs de la cité.\*\**

Sometimes:

*Ribaus, qui del'ost se departent,  
Par les chans cà et là s'espardent:  
Li uns une pilete porte;  
L'autre, croc ou massue torte.\*\*\**

Finally, they are no longer regular or paid troops, they are pillagers who devour the country through which they pass in the royal wake, and who, recruiting their numbers on all sides, form redoubtable bands of *aventuriers*, *rutiers*, *cottereaux* and *bravancons*, who with their horrible excesses, continued to multiply in France down to the reign of Charles V: "Such fellows," says an old and unpublished

\**Translator's Note*:—"The sense: "Hirelings and ribalds stripped of all."

\*\**Translator's Note*:—"Ribalds who, in accordance with an old custom, go begging about the city walls."

\*\*\**Translator's Note*:—"The ribalds set out from the hostelry, scattering here and there; some carry pikes and some a crook or crooked stick."

*French Chronicle* cited by Ducange, "such fellows as *cottereaux*, brigands, *gens de compagnie*, pillagers, robbers, thieves, they are all one and they are infamous fellows, dissolute and excommunicated."

The king of the ribalds had, then, much to do with such fellows as these on his hands, especially when the king's army was in the field; he rendered an expeditious justice, and presided sometimes at executions, in order to give them a more solemn character and to inspire more terror in his detestable subjects. But his royal prerogatives diminished in importance as the importance of the tribunal of marshals continued to grow; for the king of the ribalds, being attached personally to the king's household, he no longer took part in the campaigns when the king took the field in person. Everywhere, moreover, in the military expeditions, in the camps and in the garrisons, cognizance and judgment of all crimes and misdemeanors belonged by right to the provosts of the marshals, who usurped little by little the authority of the king of the ribalds. This officer was even supplanted by the grand provost of the marshals, in the *ost* or *chevauchée du roi*, towards the end of the fourteenth century; which caused Jean Boutillier to say that the king of the ribalds was charged with the execution of judgments which had been rendered by the provosts of the marshals. "And if it happens," he adds, "that there is any forfeiture as a result of a criminal execution, the provost by his right has the gold, silver, and girdle of the malefactor, while the marshals have the horse, the harness and all the other implements, whatever they may be, except the cloth and the habits, of whatever sort they may be, with which they are clad, which go to the king of the ribalds who looks to the execution." At the time when Boutillier published his *Somme Rurale*, the king of the ribalds was no more than a shadow of what he had been; even his title lent itself to a lack of respect, and the revenues of his office were no longer a source of honor. "The king of the ribalds," adds Boutillier, "has of right, because of his office, cognizance in all games of dice, gambling and others which take place *en ost et chevauchée du roy*. *Item*, over all the lodgings of the *bourdeaux* and the *bourdelières*, from which he is to have two sous a week." This is not all: The power of the king of the ribalds of the king's house was circumscribed in jurisdiction, since beyond this jurisdiction, each in his own place, there were many other *rois des ribauds*, each assigned to the policing of manners and named by the lords or by the cities, or even by the ignoble subjects of their sorry royalty. Wherever ribaldry

(*ribaudie*) existed, there was naturally a king of the ribalds. This description of *king* belonged customarily to the chief or elected head of a corporation, notably to those who ruled a number of distinct communities, or who united under their scepter a large number of individuals of various professions. Thus there were no kings among the furriers, the grocers, the bakers, and the other trades, who merely elected sworn masters, for the reason that they included only organizations of the same order and trades of the same nature; but there was a *king of the jugglers*, a *king of the fiddlers*, a *king of the archers*, and finally, a *king of the ribalds*. The realm of jugglers or poets assembled in a single corporation the most varied talents: the *royal* and *aged* poets, and the fiddlers, who succeeded the jugglers, or who had engulfed the latter under the statutes of a great confraternity, and who included not only musicians and poets but also mountebanks, dancers and mimes. As to the archers, they were recruited indifferently from all classes of the State, and had a king, chosen by lot or one who was designated as the most adroit with the cross-bow. The ribalds, composed of individuals of all sorts, represented a host of indecent trades, such as prostitutes, agents of Prostitution, debauchees, gamblers, gamesters, beggars, vagabonds and others of the same quality; the ribalds, in a word, were quite worthy of having a king of their own. The royal king of the ribalds, at least on certain occasions, was king of the fraternity of *rois de la ribaudie*.

Claude Fauchet, in the first book of his *Dignités et Magistrats de la France*, gives us a sufficiently precise idea of the duties of the king of the ribalds in the interior of the king's household: "He who is called king of the ribalds does not enjoy the estate of the grand provost of the house, as others have thought; he is the one who has charge of putting out of the king's house those who have no business to eat or sleep there; for in times past, those who had been given viands (which is what was later meant by saying *avoir bouche en cour*), after the clock had sounded, found themselves in the *tinnel*, or common dining-hall, and the others were constrained to leave the house; and the door having been closed, the keys were placed upon the table of the grand master, for the reason that it was forbidden those who did not have wives to sleep in the king's house; and so, to see if any strangers were hidden in the house, or if any lassies (*garces*) had been brought in, the king of the ribalds with a torch in his hand would go into all corners and secret places in the house to seek these strangers, either



robbers, or others of said quality." Fauchet, who was almost a contemporary of the last king of the ribalds, pictures that official in the exercise of his functions as he, Fauchet, had seen him at the court of Louis XII; but the picture that he gives us is not a complete and rounded one.

Étienne Pasquier has extracted the following article from a memorial of the Chamber of Accounts, under the date 1285: "Item, the king of the ribalds has six deniers in wages, and provender, and a hired valet, and sixty sous for his wardrobe the year." Since, prior to the above article, the two *portiers en parlement, quan le roy n'y est* were appointed each at two sous *pour toute chose*, it is concluded from this comparison that the king of the ribalds, possessing but six deniers in wages, occupied a rank inferior to that of porter; but there is perhaps an error in this extract, for the king of the ribalds, besides his six deniers in wages and his *provend*, (or provision of oats for his horse) has sixty sous *pour robbe* the year, which does not permit us to doubt that his wages of six deniers were daily and in addition to the revenues of his office. In an account-book of the King's household, under date 1312, his *valet à gages* is termed his provost (*prévot*): *Praepositus regis ribaldorum, qui duxit IV valletos qui vulnaverant, etc.* This provost commanded evidently a troop of archers or of sergeants, since we see him conducting to prison four valets accused of having wounded a man. In another account-book, of the household of Philip the Long, in 1317, we see once more the king of the ribalds in the character of supreme chief of the palace police; after an enumeration of the *huissiers de salle*, the *portiers*, and the *valets de porte*, with their wages, provender and profits, we come upon this entry: "Item, Crasse Joë, king of the ribalds, shall not eat at court and shall not come into the dining-hall, if he is not sent for; but he shall have six deniers of bread and two quarts of wine, a piece of flesh and a chicken, and a provender of oats, and thirteen deniers in wages, and shall be mounted by the stable, and shall keep himself always outside the gate, and shall see to it that none enter there who have not a right to enter." Another article of the same *Compte* shows us the king of the ribalds at exercise during the dinner-hour, and this entry conforms sufficiently with the idea that Fauchet gives us of the duties of this officer in the interior of the king's house: "Item, it shall be the duty of the ushers of the dining-hall (*huissiers de salle*), as soon as they hear the cry, *Aux Queux!* to see that the hall is emptied of everyone except those

who are to eat, and they shall give all others to the ushers of the dining-hall, and the ushers shall give them to the varlets of the door, and the varlets of the door shall give them to the porters, and the porters shall keep the court clear, and shall give them to the king of the ribalds, and the king of the ribalds shall see that no one else enters the door, and he who is found in default shall be punished by the master of the house who is in service for the day." Thus, under the reign of Philip the Long, the king of the ribalds found himself already shorn of his ancient privileges, to the point of no longer possessing the *bouche en cour*, and of being subordinated to the masters of the king's household. This preeminence of the masters of the household is particularly evidenced in a decree of Parliament of the 16th of March, 1404, which apprises us that "the valets of the king of the ribalds shall not bear rods, as do the ushers of the dining-hall and the porters of the king's household; and the masters of the king's household shall have jurisdiction over the said valets of the king of the ribalds." The progressive decadence of the office of king of the ribalds is still better evidenced by the diminution of his wages: an Account-Book of the king's household fixes them at 20 sous in 1324; they are not more than 5 sous a day in 1350, according to an ordinance of Philip of Valois; in 1386, an ordinance of Charles VI decrees: "The king of the ribalds, 4 Parisian sous a day, when he shall be at court, for everything."

This office, however, despite its loss of power, carried with it a certain prestige, until it was wholly suppressed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Dutillet says that "it has been long filled by gentlemen of good houses and great service, who contented the families of princes, lords, and others following the court of the king, by living well and paying their dependents." History, however, makes mention of a king of the ribalds who was degraded and put in the pillory along with his provost, probably for a failure in the duties of his office. An Account-Book of the household of the Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, son of Charles V, in 1388, records in the following terms this remarkable fact: "Jean Guerin, king of the ribalds, for the expenses of him and three others, going from Corbeil to Sedane, (Sedan) to take Guillet, former king of the ribalds, and Picardiau, his provost, to place them in the pillory there." We may suppose that the king of the ribalds who was placed in the pillory in this manner had not been in charge of the King's household, but rather that he had held office in some city dependent upon the jurisdiction of the

royal king of the ribalds. This latter had the right of execution and of escheat over certain ones who were given to him after judgment by the ordinary tribunals of the king's household, according to a mention made in the records of the *Chambre des Comptes*, in the year 1330: "The *gens des requestes* of the palace imposed perpetual silence on two women who caparisoned themselves contrary to a decree of the Chamber, on pain of being given over to the king of the ribalds and of being punished as infamous." In an Account of the King's household in 1396, sixty-eight Parisian sous are paid by the hand of the king of the ribalds to the executioner who had hung a malefactor named Jean Boulart, and who had interred alive a woman named Pernette la Basmette for the theft of a court vessel from the *château de Compiègne*. A king of the ribalds had much to do in the king's house, when he desired conscientiously to fulfill the requirements of his office; he undoubtedly did not personally look after the executions which were entrusted to him, his provost ordinarily taking his place on such disagreeable occasions, but he himself paid the executioner, and he was responsible for the *besogne* which his valets left to other hands. These latter, the same as their master, wore *jackets with the sign of the sword* (*hoquetons à l'enseigne de l'épée*), as Dutillet says, in order to recall the fact that the king of the ribalds had formerly inflicted criminal justice in the king's household.

This personage had to be a tried servant of royalty, a faithful and incorruptible defender of the person of the king, since the guarding of the gates and the interior policing of the palace during meals and after the curfew were especially delegated to him. Thus, we are not surprised to see a king of the ribalds named Coquelet suddenly dying of emotion at the coronation of Charles VI in 1380. The one looked upon as the last titular incumbent of this office, Jean Talleran, lord of Grignaux, gives proof of his devotion to the crown by advising the young Duke of Angoulême, whom he perceived to be greatly taken with Mary of England, not to run the risk of giving a direct heir to the old King, Louis XII; we have here, so to speak, the last will and testament of this strange royalty, which expires with this bit of political foresight, in the presence of which the young Prince, who happened to be Francis I, felt a chill come over his amorous emotions. The king of the ribalds did not step out of his official capacity too far when he advised in this manner his future sovereign, for he was not a stranger to questions of adultery; and according to some scholars, he demanded

five sous in gold of every married woman who had relations with a man other than her husband. But it is probable that the royal king of the ribalds did not participate in the privileges of the local kings of ribaldry. We should have difficulty in applying to him, for example, what is said about this fine of five sous by the anonymous author of the *Histoire des Inaugurations* (Bevy): "If she refused to pay, he had the right to seize her chair (*selle*)," that is to say, probably, her *chaire*, or the seat of honor which she commonly occupied. That the bordelières who followed the court should have paid a tax is a circumstance by no means contrary to the usages and customs of feudal law, according to which each tributary was bound to contribute to the revenues of his lord. The weekly revenue from the vassals of the king of the ribalds must have been two sous in gold, if we are to believe Boutillier and Ragueau. Jean le Ferron, who represents this officer as guarding the chamber of the king, still does not hesitate to vilify him by alleging that he lodged in his house and supported public women at the expense of the court. This fresh allegation, as to the enrichment of the royal king of the ribalds, does not impress us as being so altogether unlikely, when we see suddenly established on the ruins of this office that of *dame des filles de joie suivant la cour* (lady of the daughters of joy following the court), an analogous office which was in effective existence during the major part of the sixteenth century. Finally, Dutillet adds to the duties which the *filles de cour* owed the king of the ribalds the fact that they were obliged to *make his bed* throughout the month of May.

The king of the ribalds having given way to the distaff, after the death of the *good* Seigneur de Grignaux, "it was a lady, and a great lady sometimes," according to M. Rabutaux, "who remained charged with the policing of the women of the court." In 1535, her name was Olive Sainte, and she received from Francis I a gift of 90 pounds "to aid her and her said daughters to live and support the expenses which fall to them ordinarily in following the court." (See the *Glossaire* of Ducange and Carpentier, on the word *meretricalis vestis*.) A number of ordinances of the same sort, enacted between the years 1539 and 1546, have been preserved; and these ordinances indicate that each year, in the month of May, all the *filles* following the court were granted the honor of presenting to the king the *spring* bouquet or *St. Valentine's bouquet*, which announced the return of springtime and of the pleasures of love. On the 30th of June, 1540, Francis I



orders Jean de Val, his treasurer, to "pay to Cécile de Viefville, mistress of the daughters of joy following the court, the sum of 45 pounds in the money of Tours, making the value of 20 crowns in gold, at the rate of 45 sous the piece: of which he makes her a gift, for herself as well as for the other women and girls of her vocation, to share among themselves as they shall see fit, and for the month of May last past, as it has been the custom to do from all antiquity." We are not, however, of the opinion of M. Rabutaux, who confounds Cécile de Viefville with a duchess of the ancient house of Vieuville, which had no marquises until the time of Henri III, and no dukes till Louis XIV. M. Champollion-Figéac, in publishing this remarkable ordinance in his *Mélanges Historiques* (Volume IV, page 479), has failed to see the noble wife of a duke and a peer of the realm in the collateral heir of the royal king of the ribalds! This disgraceful office still existed in 1558, since Gouye de Longuemare has discovered an ordinance of Henri II, under date of July 13th of the same year, which is intended to reform the abuse of the institution: "It is very expressly enjoined and recommended to all daughters of joy and others, not being under the rule of the said mistress of the said daughters of joy, to void the court of their incontinent presence after the publication (of this ordinance), while those under the rule of the said mistress are forbidden to go to the villages, and the *chartiers*, muleteers, and others are forbidden to convey, receive or lodge them, as well as to swear or to blaspheme the name of God, under pain of the lash; and by the same token, the said daughters of joy are bidden to obey and follow the said mistress as is their custom, being enjoined not to offer her any insult, under pain of the lash." Such was the final metamorphosis of the office of king of the ribalds at the French court.

As to the other *rois des ribauds*, who derived certainly from the one of the royal household, we find them everywhere in the history of the cities as well as in the history of the princely houses. There was thus, at the court of Burgundy, a king of the ribalds whose functions were patterned after those of his confrère of the court of France. Colinboule was in charge under the Duke Philip the Good, and the name does not indicate a person of high distinction. In 1423, it is true, the title of *king of the ribalds* had lost much of its éclat, and the curate of Notre-Dame d'Abbeville could not have been greatly flattered at hearing himself described as *king of the ribalds*. It is to be understood that this title was not calculated to inspire respect in one

familiar with the excesses of the ribalds, whom their king could only govern by brute force. This office had been, in the beginning, well looked upon, and a good deal more powerful, for ribaldry had not yet left upon it the stigma of its name. In a charter of Henry II, King of England and Duke of Normandy, who reigned in 1154 (see Ducange on the word *panagator*), there is question evidently of the office of king of the ribalds; and the sergeant of the King, who fills this office, Balderic, son of Gillebert, honored with the good graces of his master, and made grand provost of marshals in the province of Normandy, is referred to as "guardian of the public women who prostitute themselves in the *lupanar* of Rouen (*custos meretricum publice venalium in lupanar de Roth*)."

In the cities of the provinces, the king of the ribalds was sometimes judge, sometimes the executioner of criminal justice in the matter of ribaldry (*ribauderie*). An ancient record of the Hôtel de Ville of Bordeaux indicates that everything confiscated was "given to the king of the ribalds, to cause him to run through the town, with good rods and good *glèbes*." Metz also had its king of the ribalds, who was not a very elevated personage. The king of the ribalds of the city of Laon did not always live on good terms with the bailiff of Vermandois: in 1270, his provost, named Poinsard (*Poincardus, praepositus ribaldorum*), was accused before the bailiff's tribunal of having, in complicity with certain persons named Jean le Croseton and Wiet Lipois, committed acts of violence against the Abbey of Saint-Martin de Laon and its abbot (see the *Olim*, published by Count Beugnot, Volume I, page 813). This affair undoubtedly led to the suppression of the office of king of the ribalds at Laon; for Philip III, in an ordinance of 1283, orders the bailiff of Vermandois not to suffer this office to exist, under any pretext, either publicly or secretly (*quod, clam vel palam vel sub aliquo simulato colore, non permittat regem ribaldorum in villa Laudunensi*). This official prohibition of the office did not extend to all localities; for in 1483, the city of Saint-Amand had a "king of amorous women (*roi des filles amoureuses*)" named Jacob de Godunesme. The executioner of Toulouse took the title of king of the ribalds, as though still further to discredit that impoverished individual.\* Finally, the *Coutume de Cambrae* defines, in no uncertain terms,

*Translator's Note*:—See Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, the Second Day, story entitled "The Prisoner" in my translation (Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926): "When morning had passed the great bell of the Commune, tolling slowly, slow, gave the signal for the

the privileges of the king of the ribalds: "The said king shall have, take and receive from each woman who couples herself carnally with a man for money, provided she owns or rents a house in the city, five Parisian sous for each time. Item, from all the women who come to the city, and who come under the ordinance for the first time, two sous in the money of Tours. Item, from each woman, under the said ordinance, who changes her dwelling, or who goes out of the city and remains a night, twelve deniers each time that the case occurs. Item, he shall have a table to himself in one of the fiefs of the palace, or in such place as the bailiff shall please to ordain."

These articles of the *Coutume de Cambrae* acquaint us definitely with the revenues which the king of the ribalds of that city demanded, not only from the public women who dwelt there, but even from those who merely passed through his dominions. This revenue, and others of the same sort, were not always collected without difficulty, and the agents of the king of the ribalds sometimes met with terrific opposition. It is thus that a certain Antoine de Sagiac, who called himself a commissary of the king of the ribalds of Mâcon and *suppôt* of the order of *goliardes* or *buffoons* of that city, is to be found perishing in a brawl, in 1380, in the village of Beaujeu, where he had endeavored to collect a fine of five sous from a married woman whom he had accused of adultery. Pierre Talon (*Calcis*), husband of this woman, who was named Colette (*Cola*), and his brother, Étienne, intervened to defend their wife and sister-in-law. Antoine de Sagiac was a *ribaudo* of the worst sort, who haunted the wine-shops, and who lived at the expense of the poor wretches upon whom he levied contributions under pretext of *ribaudie*, of *goliardie* and of *bouffonnerie*, by threatening them with prison. He displayed poor judgment this time, and Colette, strong in her innocence, insisted that she had not slept with a man other than her husband. The latter offered himself as a guarantor of her innocence, and when the ribaud wanted to seize the pretended adulteress and take her to Macôn, Pierre Talon and his brother assassinated him upon the spot. The bailiff of Macôn prosecuted the case against the murderers and against Colette, who had been the

justice that was to be done; and when the ecclesiastical standards had been brought out, and the sentence of condemnation had been read, which lasted till evening, the malefactor with the most resounding voice came down the way, with a rope about his neck and a tinsel crown upon his head, signifying that he was the King of the Ribaldries." Etc. This would seem to indicate that a condemned prisoner was the king of the ribalds in this case. (Putnam translation, page 92.)

cause of the murder; but the inquiry revealed the fact that the dead man had wrongly accused Colette of having given herself to a man other than her husband (*contra veritatem imponens quod ipsa cum alio quam viro occubuerat*) and that this ribaud (*se gerens pro ribaldo et se dicens de ordine seu de statu goliardorum seu buffonum*) was in the habit of leading the most scandalous life in the taverns and bad houses, playing upon the simplicity of the most respectable women, whom he taxed in the name of king of the ribalds. Letters of remission were solicited and obtained in favor of the defendants, who were not further inconvenienced concerning the death of Antoine de Sagiag; but in these letters, which justified Colette, it was not stated in a formal manner that the king of the ribalds of Macôn did not possess the right to collect a fine of five sous from every married woman convicted of adultery (*super qualibet muliere uxorata adulterante, sibi competere et posse exigere quinque solidos et pro eisdem dictam talem mulierem de suo tripede pignorare*). The King of France, moreover, appeared to recognize implicitly this ancient revenue of Prostitution (*de talique et alio vili quaestu*), which the ribalds of Macôn had arrogated to themselves.











